

Now listen! When Farmer Bob comes thru
the door, that's when ~~the~~ we circle around and... A
Are you chewing ~~again~~ again?
cud

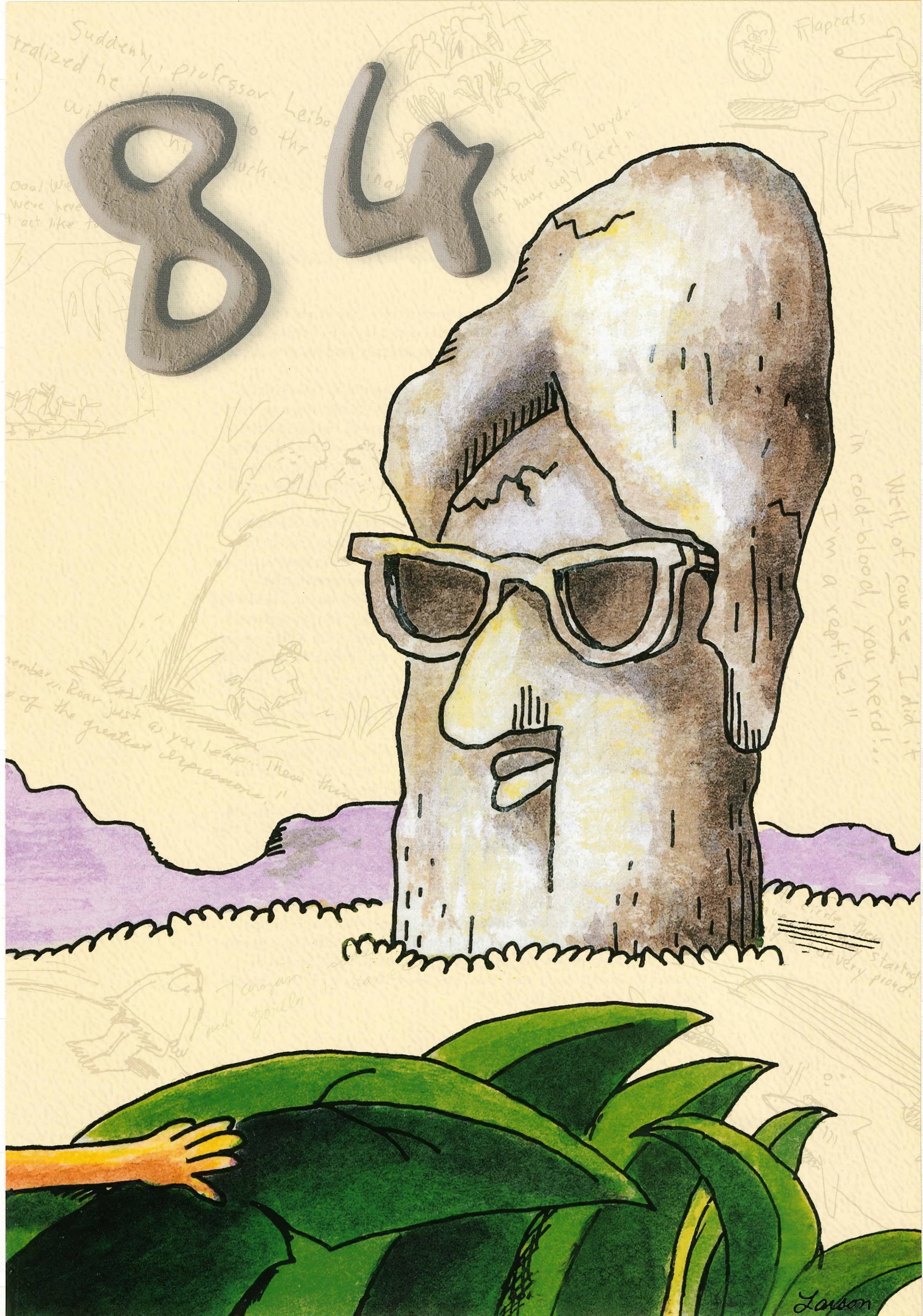
19

"So! Still won't talk? I guess
it's time to use a little device
we call around here 'the thingy'
(like to.)

"No, Grog!... This time
Thuona's turn lick bowl

"Hold it right there, miss
limit on those is six, and it's
like you're one over."

"A bald head,
Murray! A bald head!
And it's right - under
neath - me!"



A Bad Day in Cartoon Land

This is something I swore I would never reveal—ever. It was the worst day of my cartooning career—a day when I curled up into a fetal position on the floor of my studio (my usual reaction to adversity) and stayed there until the urge to die had passed.

I had promised myself I would never talk about this to anyone unless someone else brought it up. And no one ever did. (Actually, that's not true. A 12-year-old kid did ask me about it at a book signing, but he was easy to blow off.) In essence, I made it to the end of my career without ever being asked about the thing I had once thought would be my undoing. And oddly enough, 24 hours after my panic had been triggered, my book editor, with a single word, made my worst day ancient history.

It was 1984, and my publisher had been pumping out *Far Side* books with a who-knows-how-long-this-will-last fervor. I was never very keen on this process, as folks there were well aware, but they were the experts, not me. ("Momentum" was one of those words that got bandied around a lot.)

But the more tangible downside to this rush-to-print was the parallel rush to come up with new book titles and covers. I literally could get a phone call on Monday from someone in the production department telling me she needed a book title and a cover on Friday. And complicating the usual frenzy, once you've come out with a book called *The Far Side*, what's next? Hello to the following: *Beyond The Far Side*, *Valley of The Far Side*, *In Search of The Far Side*, *Hound of The Far Side*, *It Came from The Far Side*, and *Bride of The Far Side*. (Have I left any out?)

Somewhat better titles followed, I think, but for a while things were in a rut. My own idea of just numbering the books—*The Far Side #1*, *The Far Side #2*, and so on—horried everyone and didn't get very far.

And so we come to *In Search of The Far Side*. Not a difficult cover and title to conceive, really. Just draw a couple of explorers who have hacked their way through the jungle and are gazing upon a giant stone carving in the image of a woman I often draw. Done.

A couple of months later, the book was printed, and I got a few advance copies. Always exciting. And the cover looked nice. (I drew it, an artist painted it, and you can see it on the previous page.) Then one evening a few friends came over, and there's my latest book to show off. It got passed around, until one person stopped, looked at the cover, and then sort of strangely looked up at me, and said, "Isn't this woman sort of, uh ... phallic-looking?" (DON'T LOOK AT IT!)

My God, that was a horrible evening. I grabbed the book and just stared at the cover. I'm thinking, I'm a dead man. I, Gary Larson, in my rush to meet a deadline, have drawn a gigantic penis on the cover of a book. (I SAID DON'T LOOK!)

I'm telling you, officially, *this was an accident!* Once the stone woman was painted in a contiguous gray, all her usual features blended into a single, uh, element. (Should I be blaming this on the artist?) It was just like I had imagined it, but here was a time when my imagination didn't quite get to the next level. The level of doom.

Enter Donna Martin, my main book editor. I called her the very next morning (early, and from my fetal position on the floor), letting her know the sky was about to fall. At the time, Donna was maybe in her early 50s, conservative-looking, professional, born and raised in America's heartland. Not what you'd call a flamboyant, devil-may-care kind of person. In fact, I wasn't even sure how to tell her what I had done, but somehow I got it out. *In Search of The Far Side*, I told her, had something on the cover that might be "mistaken" for something else. Specifically, Donna—a penis.

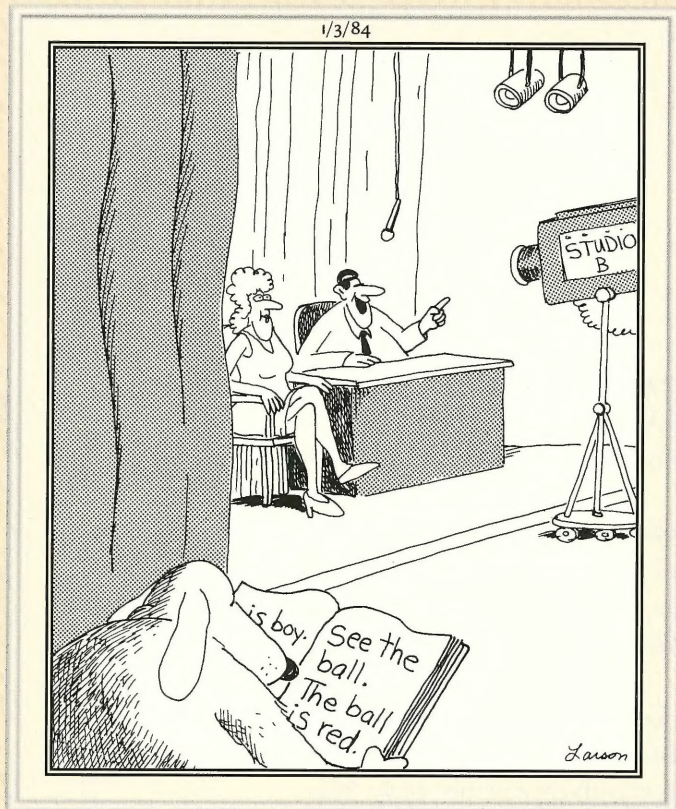
Donna was quiet. (I remember this very well.) I knew she was studying the cover. And then she said the one word I never expected, and its impact on me was unbelievable.

"So?"

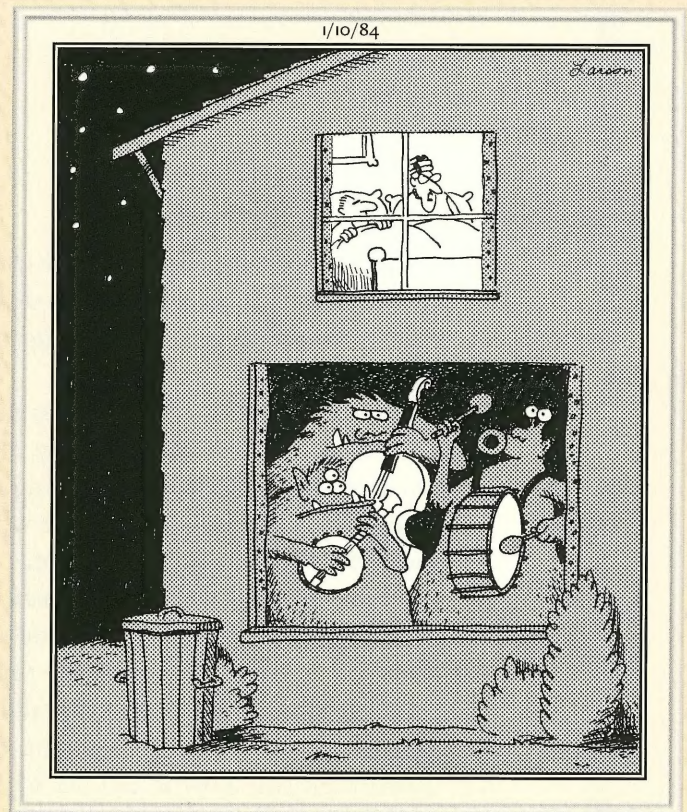
That was it. In fact, she didn't even try to reassure me by saying something like, "Oh, Gary, people see what they wanna see." That response would probably have convinced me I *was* doomed. But Donna didn't veer from the issue in the slightest. With absolute calm in her voice, she matter-of-factly stated how cultures all over the world are rife with phallic imagery. Big deal, was her calm assessment. It was like, *C'mon, Gary—I thought you had some major concern to discuss. ... I got an office to run here!*

And that's the last time it was ever brought up, by me or anybody else. (Except for that 12-year-old kid.) Over the years, I sometimes wondered what was going on out there among the other people who bought the book, but I never worried about it again. I had my response ready. "Sooooooo?" Man, what a great word.

On that day, the worst day of my cartooning life, that single word made every concern just vanish. And, to tell you the truth, I even like that cover. (BUT DON'T LOOK AT IT!)



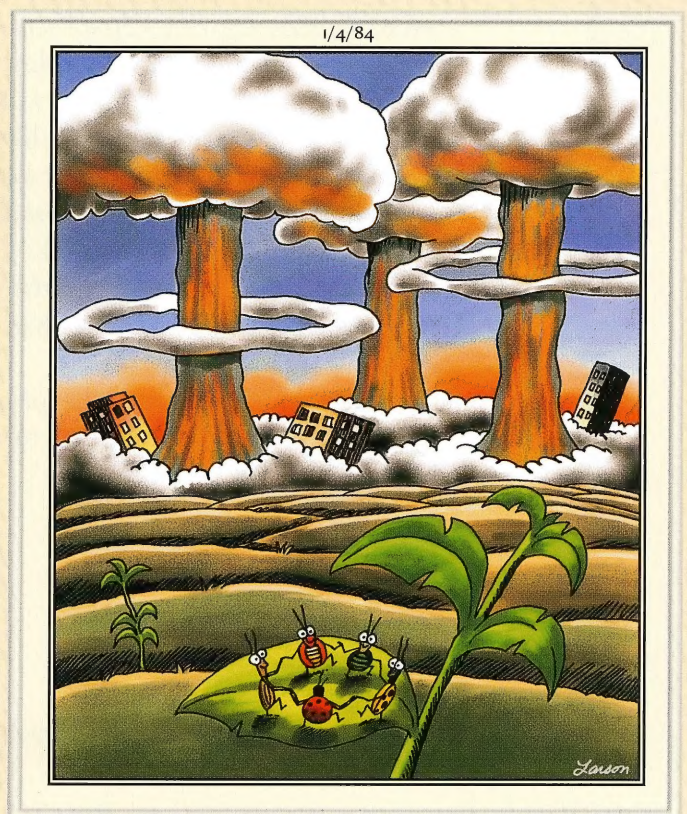
"And now—can dogs really talk? ... We found one who's willing to try, right after this message."

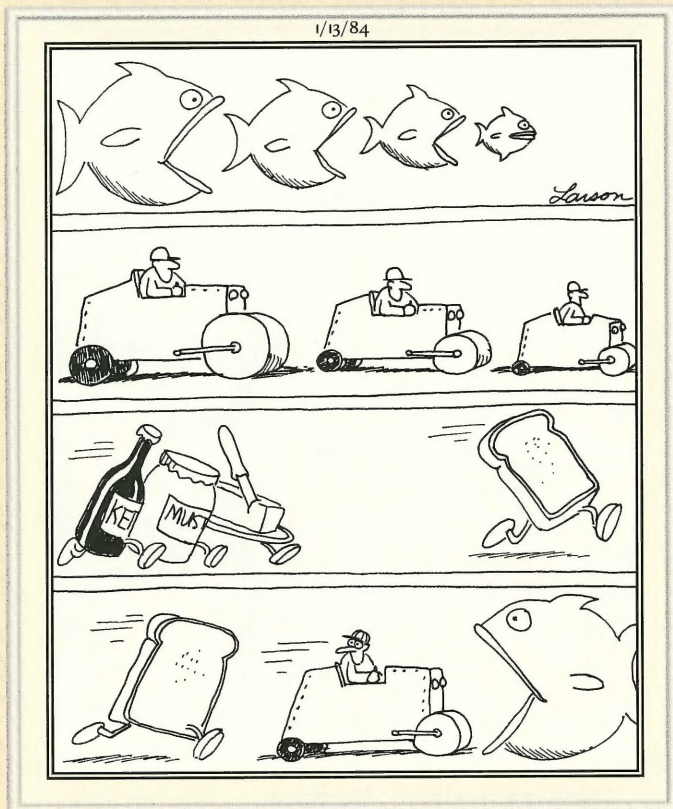


"Well, okay, Frank. ... Maybe it *is* just the wind."

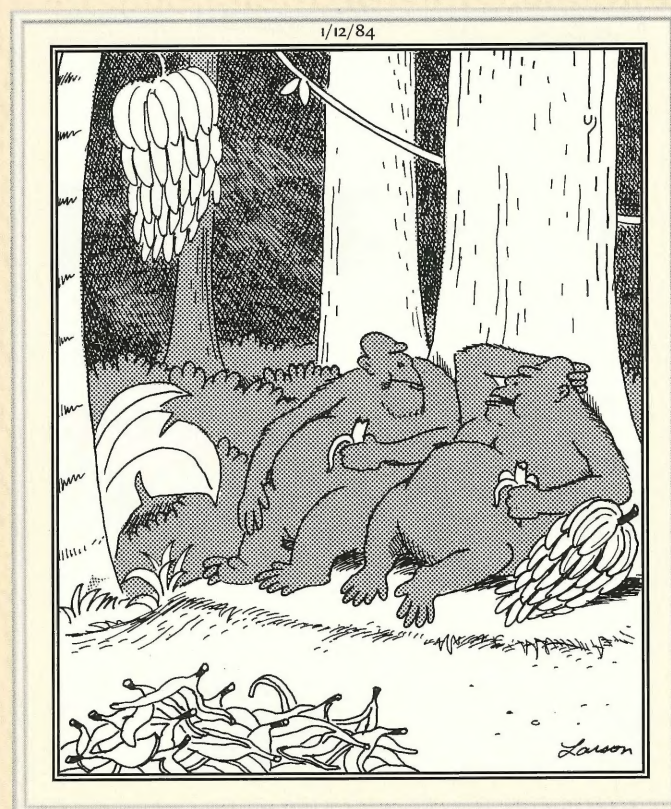


Laboratory peer pressure

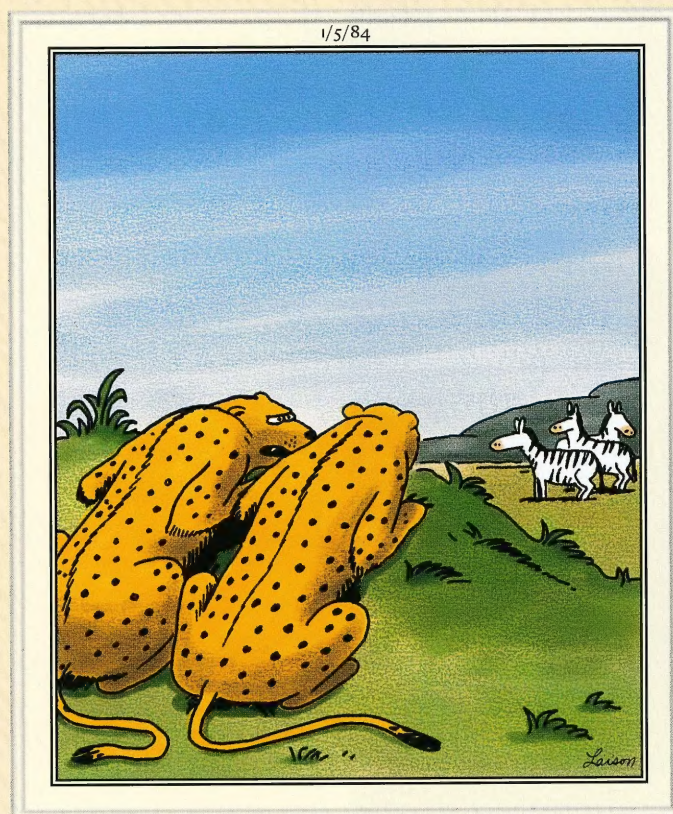




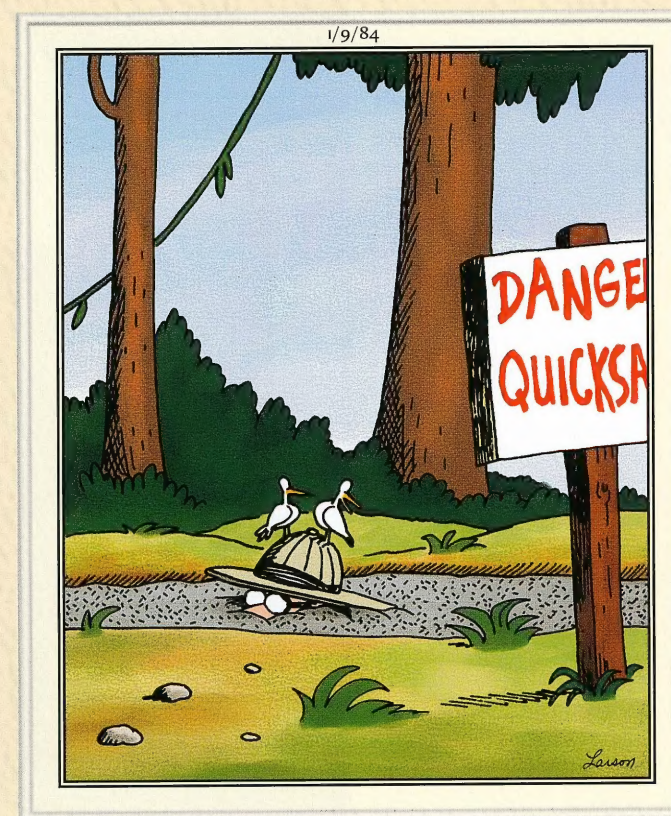
Various philosophies



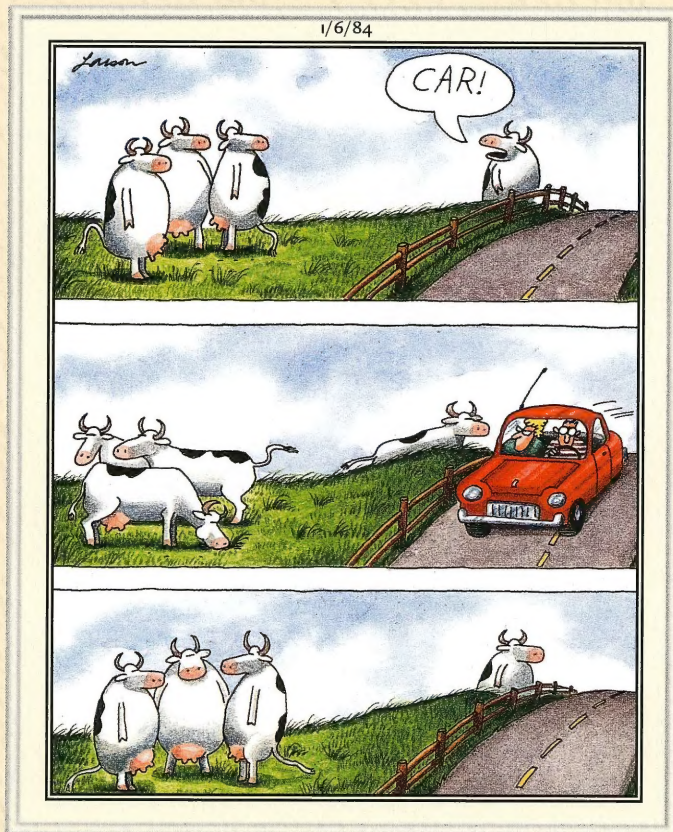
"You know, Sid, I really like bananas. ... I mean, I know that's not profound or nothin'. ... Heck! We *all* do. ... But for me, I think it goes far beyond that."



"Listen ... I'm fed up with this 'weeding out the sick and the old' business. ... I want something in its prime."



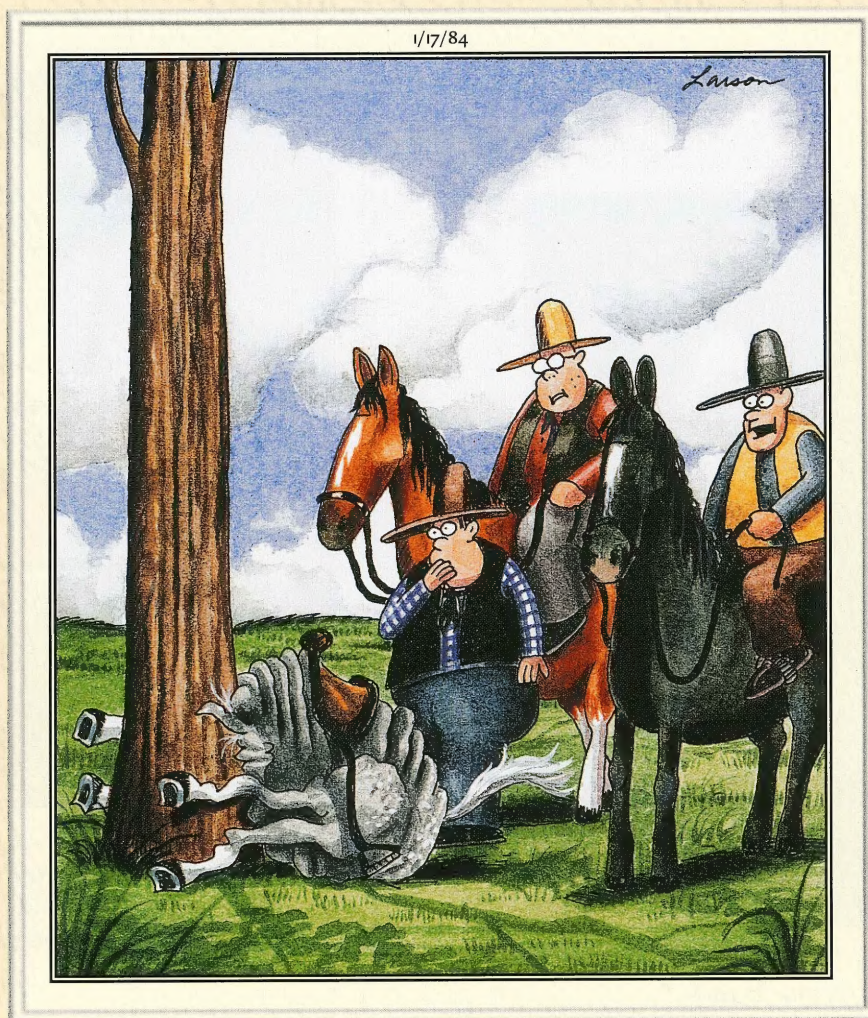
"Say, there's something wrong here. ... We may have to move shortly."



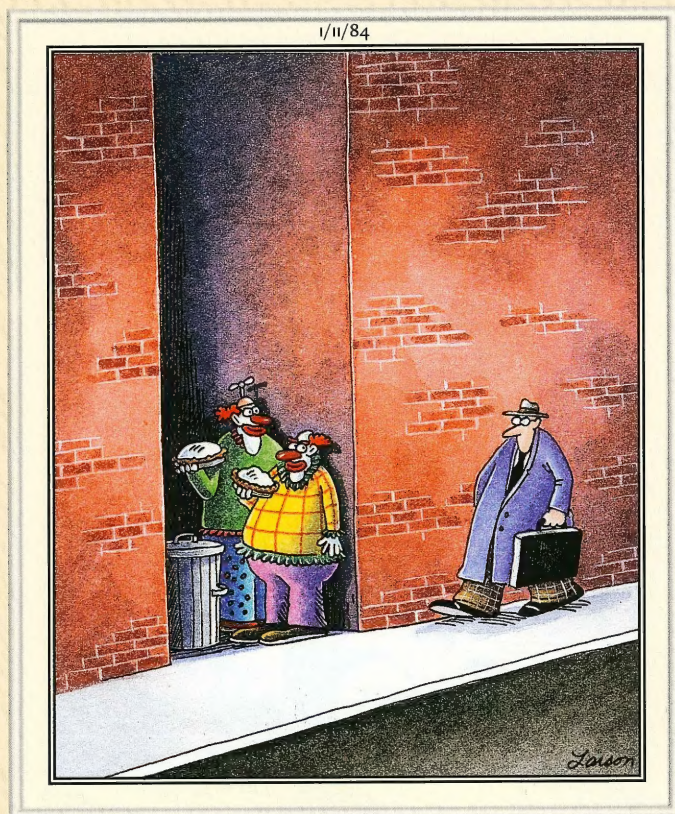
"Now calm down, Barbara. ... We haven't looked everywhere yet, and an elephant can't hide in here forever."



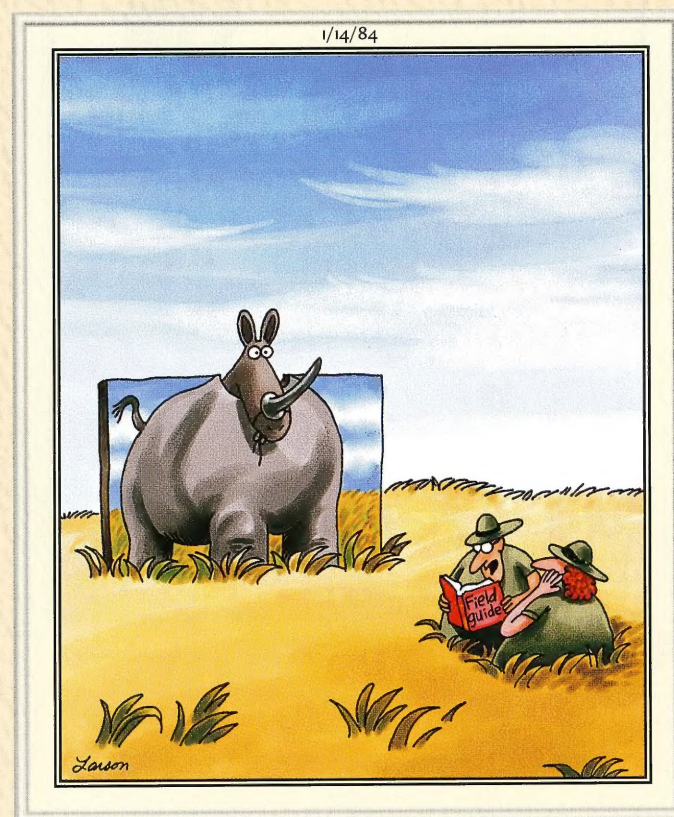
"Whoa, Frank. ... Guess what youuuuuuuuu sat in!"



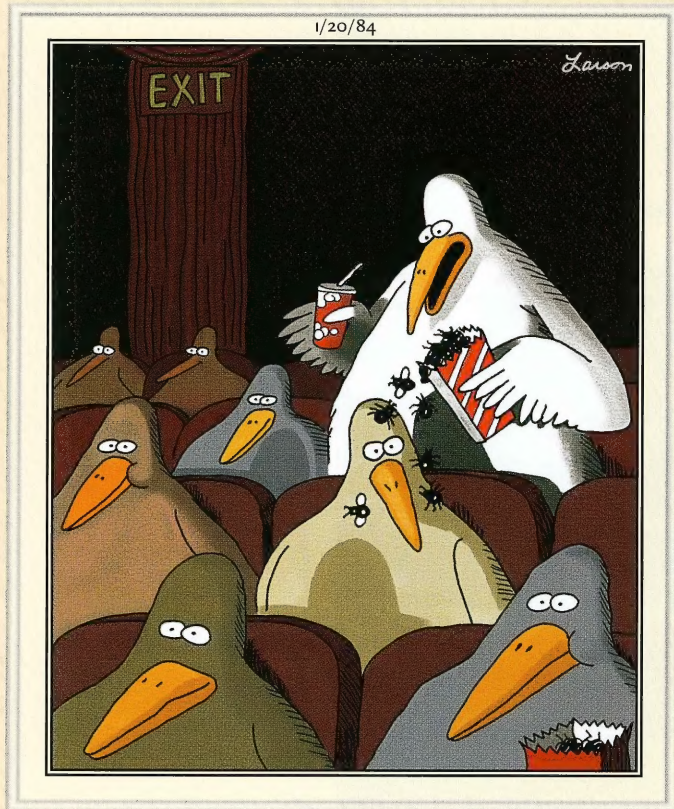
"What are you gonna tell your dad, Chuck?"



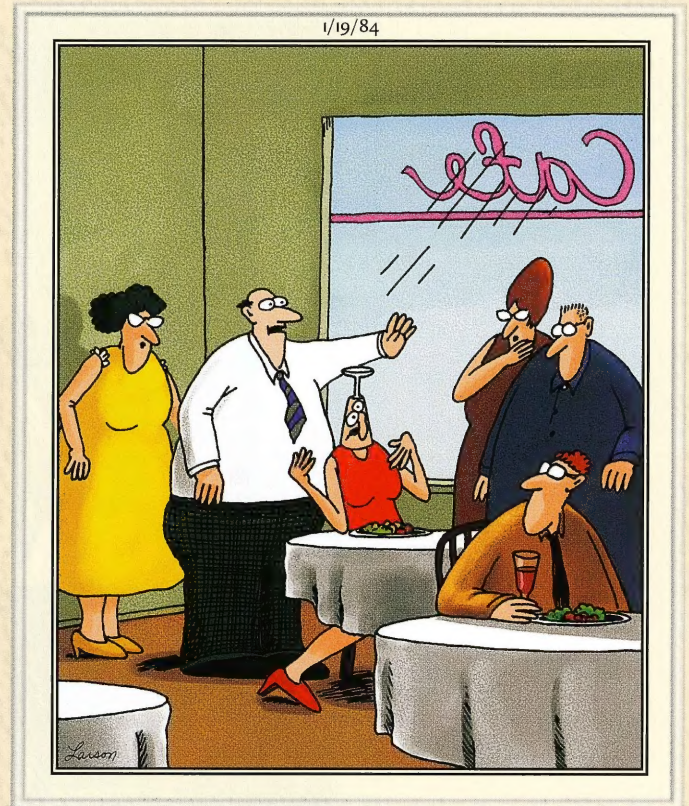
When clowns go bad



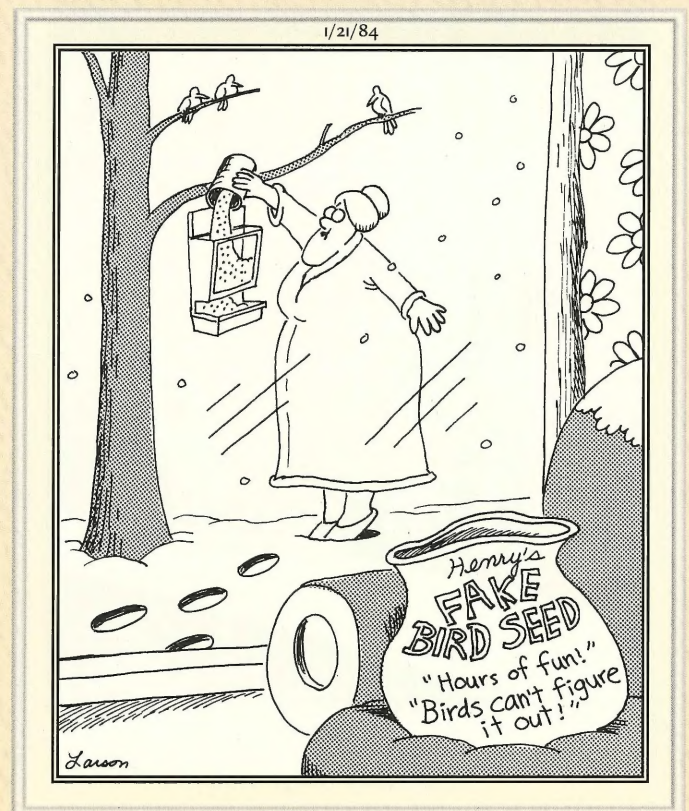
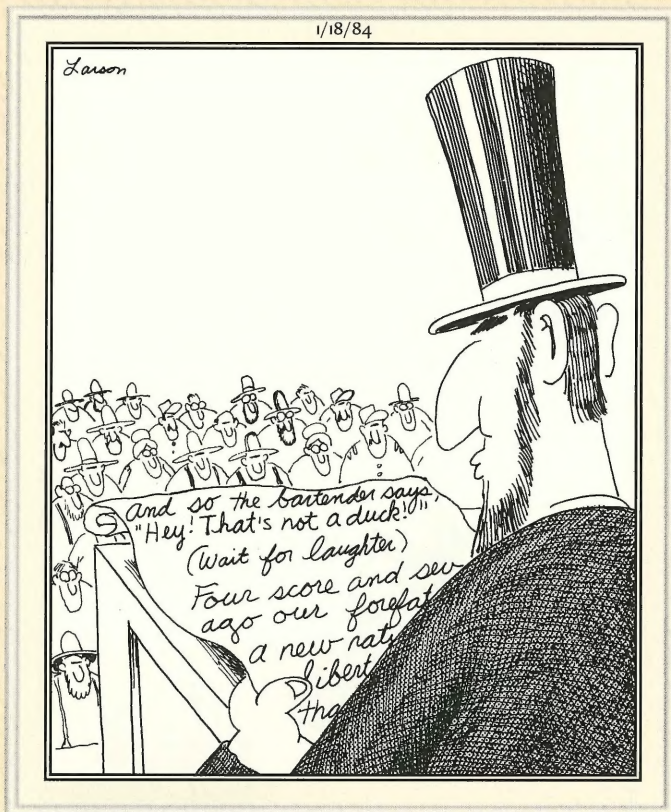
"Wait a minute! Just wait a minute! No need to worry. ... According to this, we're dealing with a rhino *mimic*!"

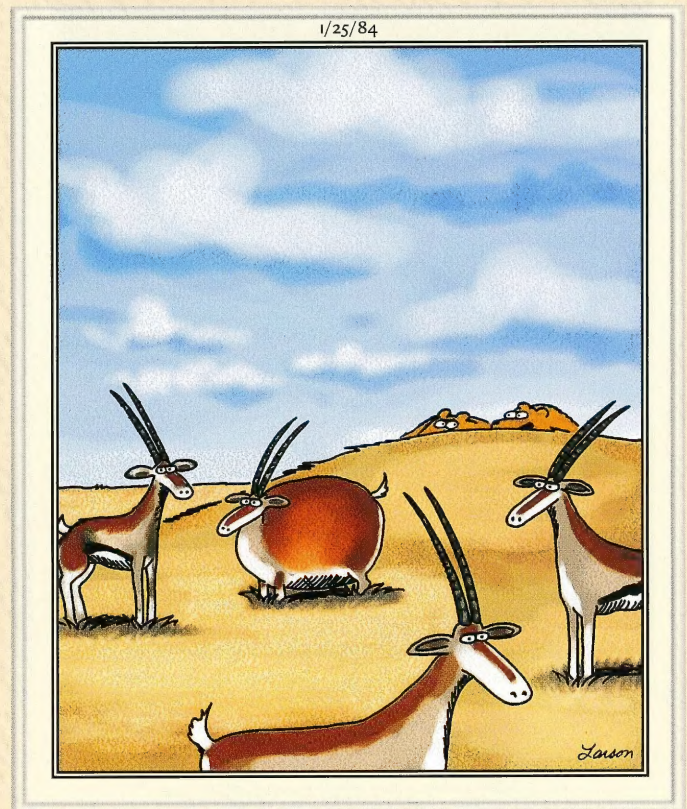
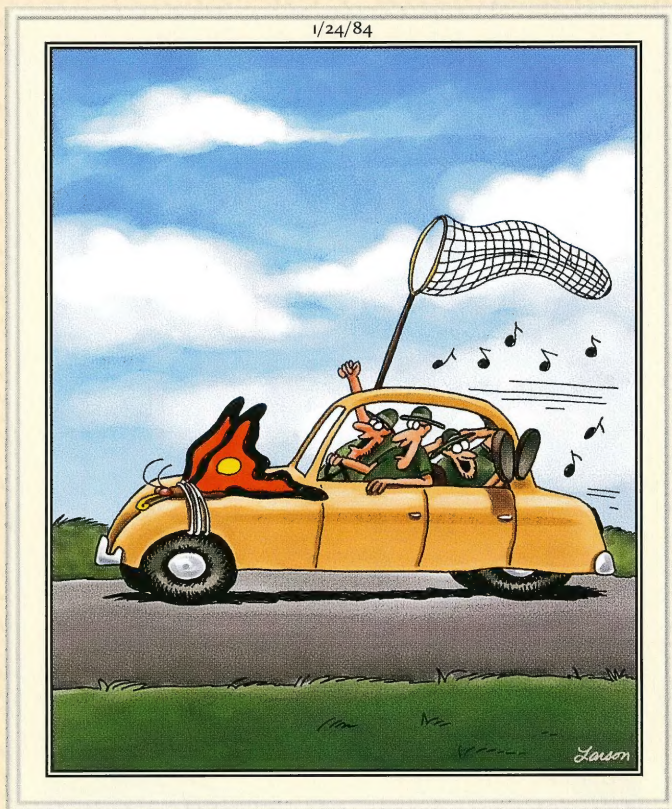


"Dang! ... Sorry, buddy."

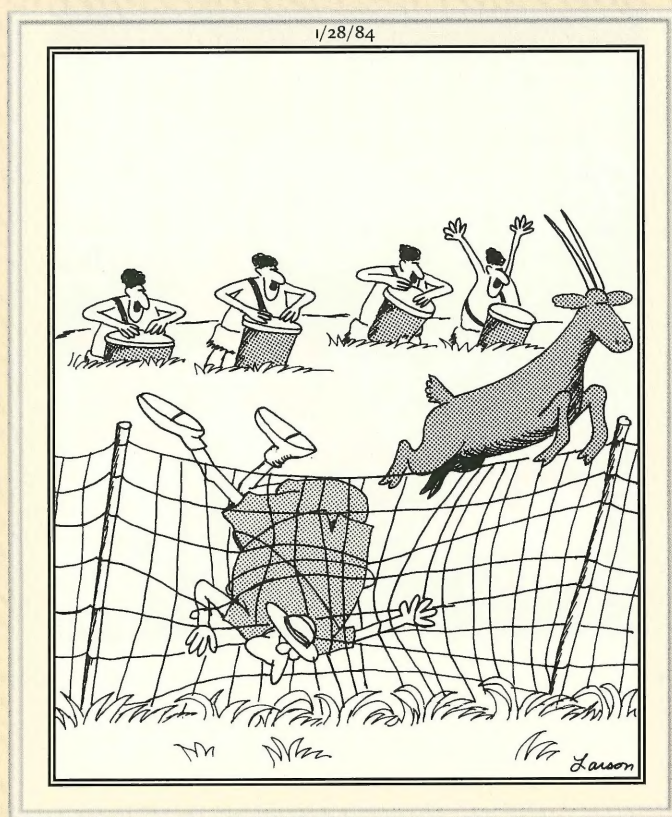


"Calm down, everyone! I've had experience with this sort of thing before. ... Does someone have a hammer?"

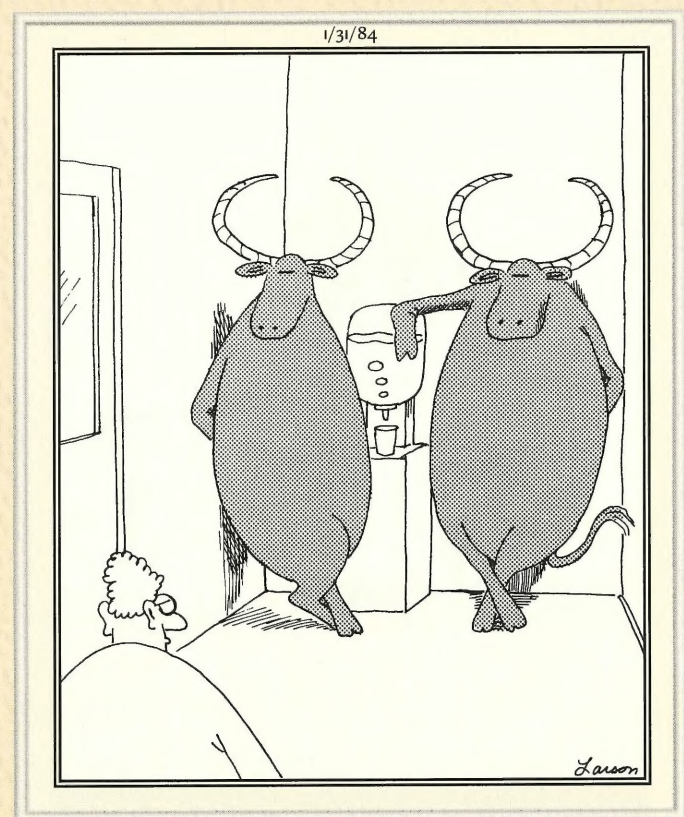




"Dibs."



Confused by the loud drums, Roy is flushed into the net.



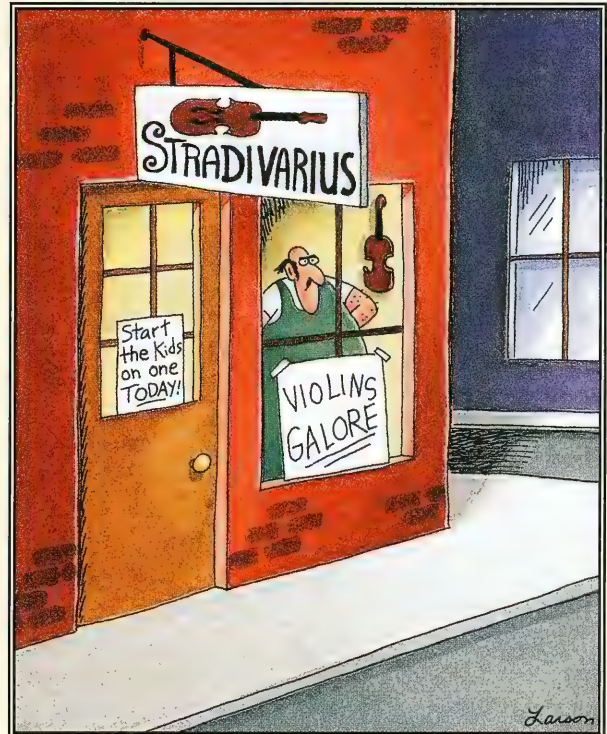
Water buffaloes

1/23/84

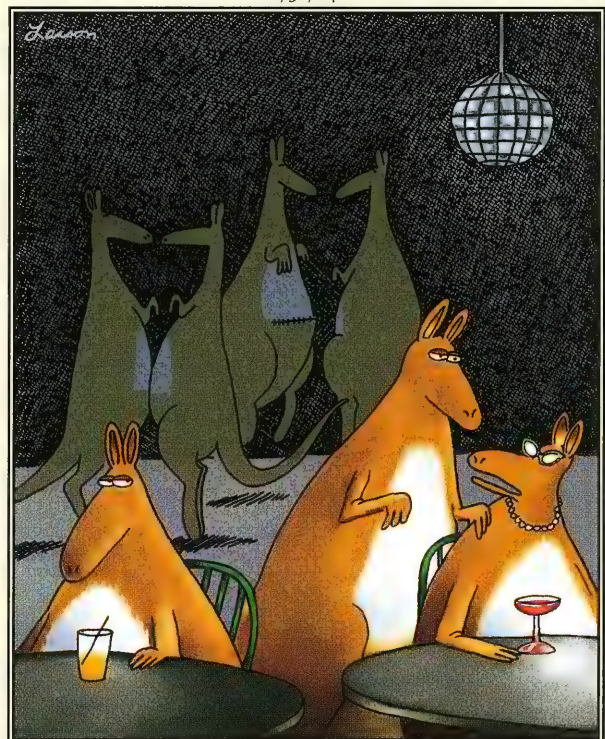


"Thunderstick? ... You actually said, 'Thunderstick'? ... That, my friend, is a Winchester thirty-aught-six."

1/27/84



1/30/84

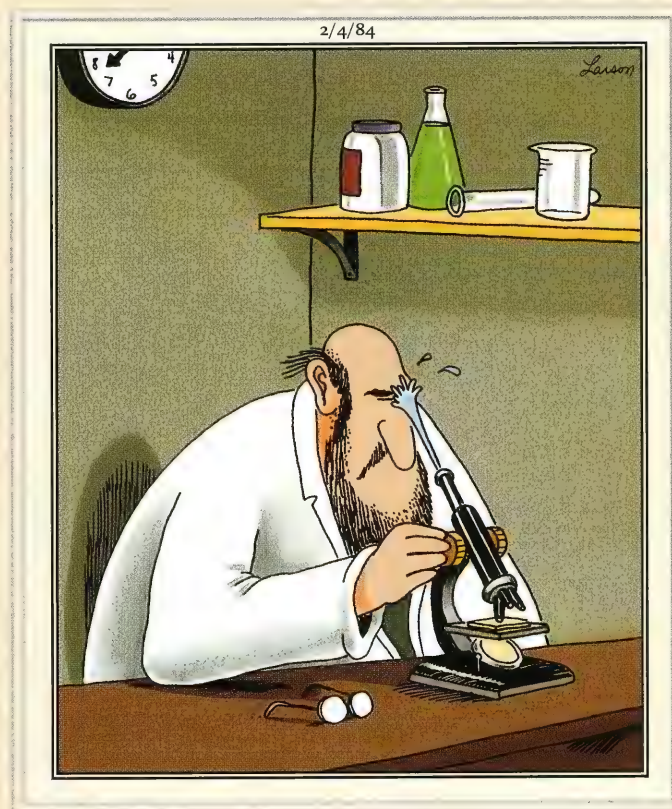
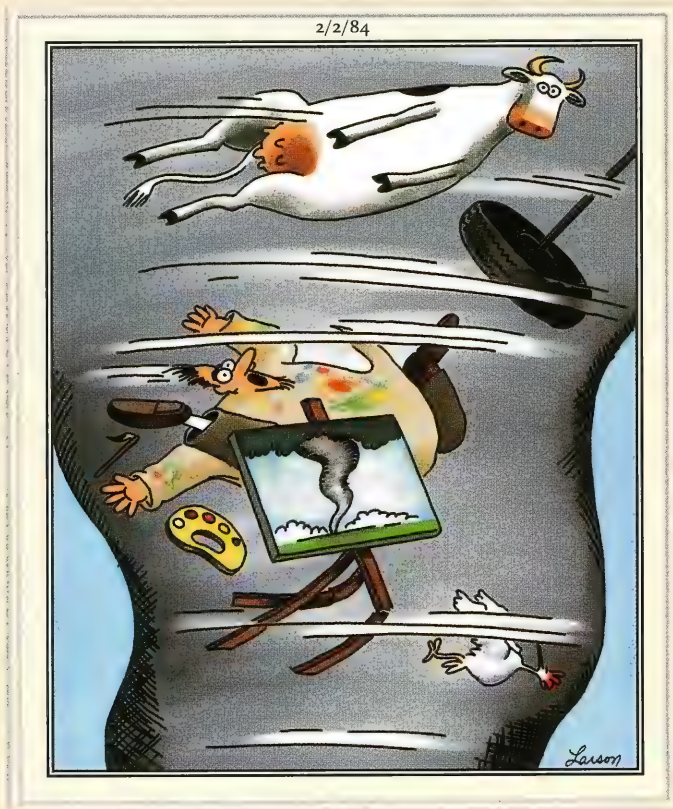


"No, thank you ... I don't jump."

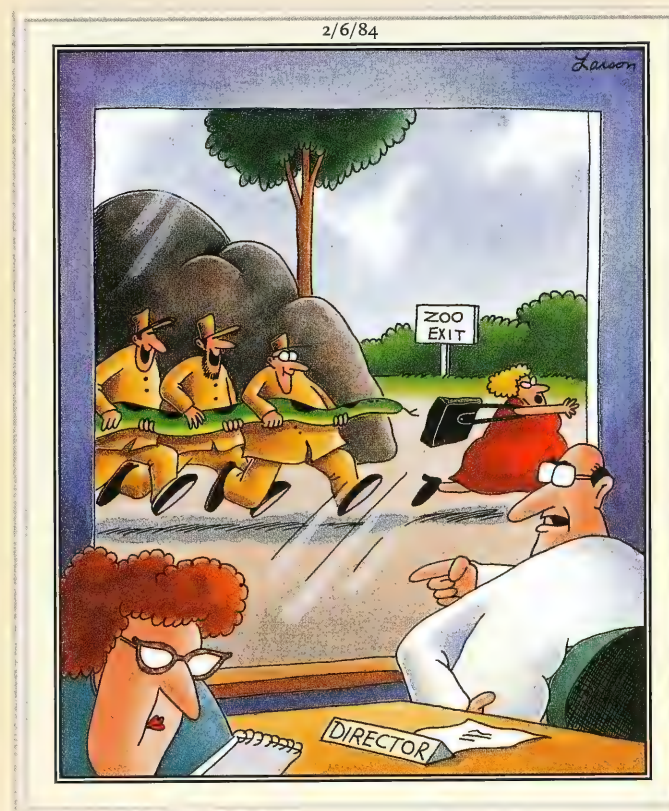
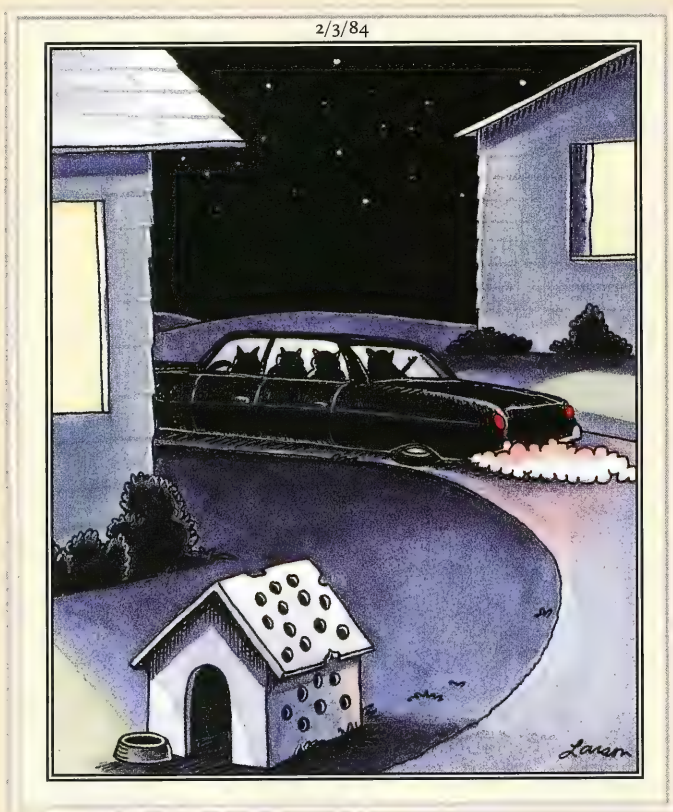
1/26/84



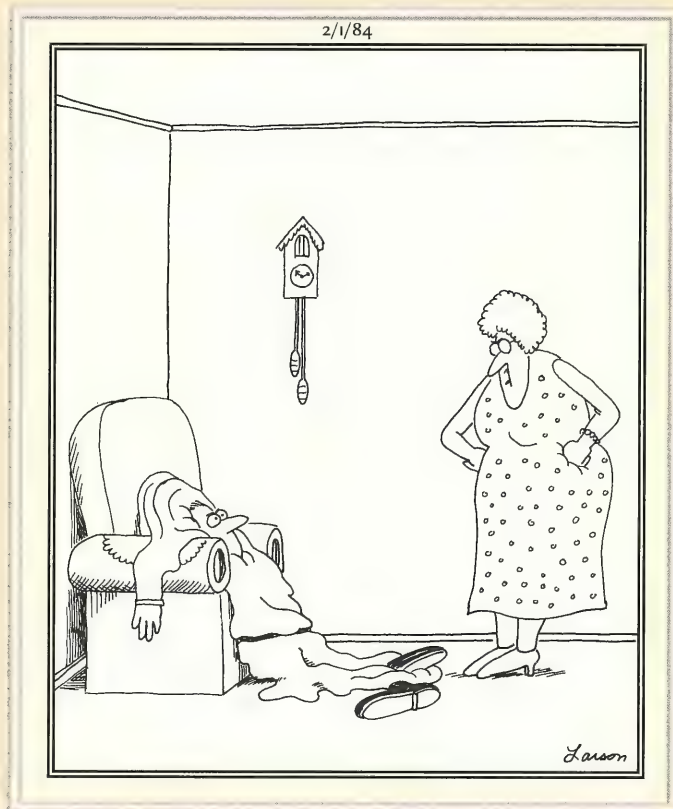
"For the one-hundredth time in as many days—I HAVEN'T GOT A QUARTER!"



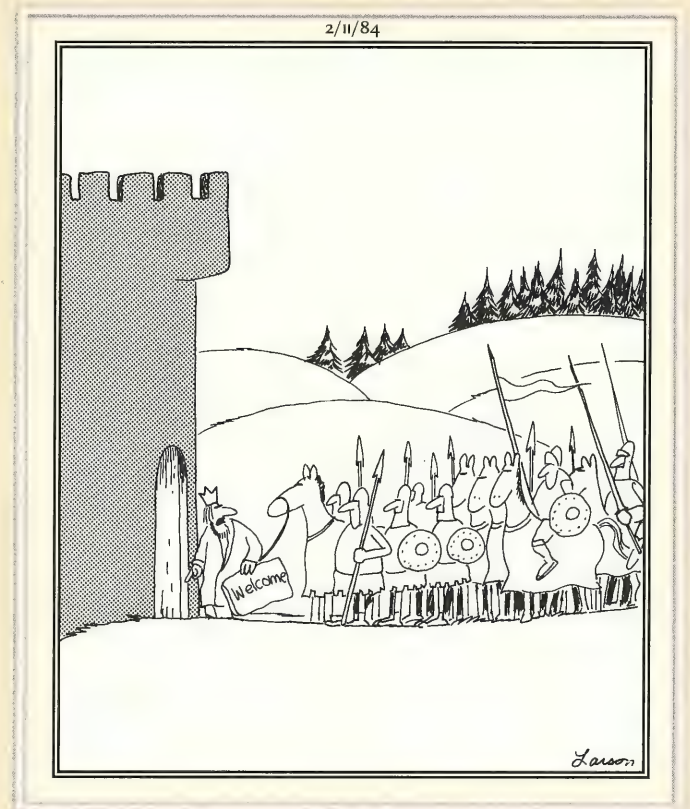
Paramecium humor



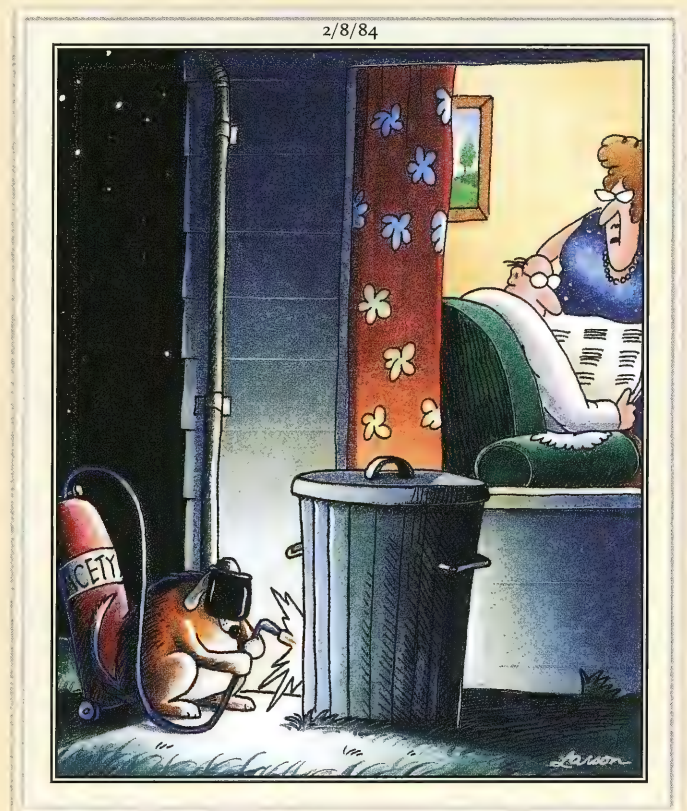
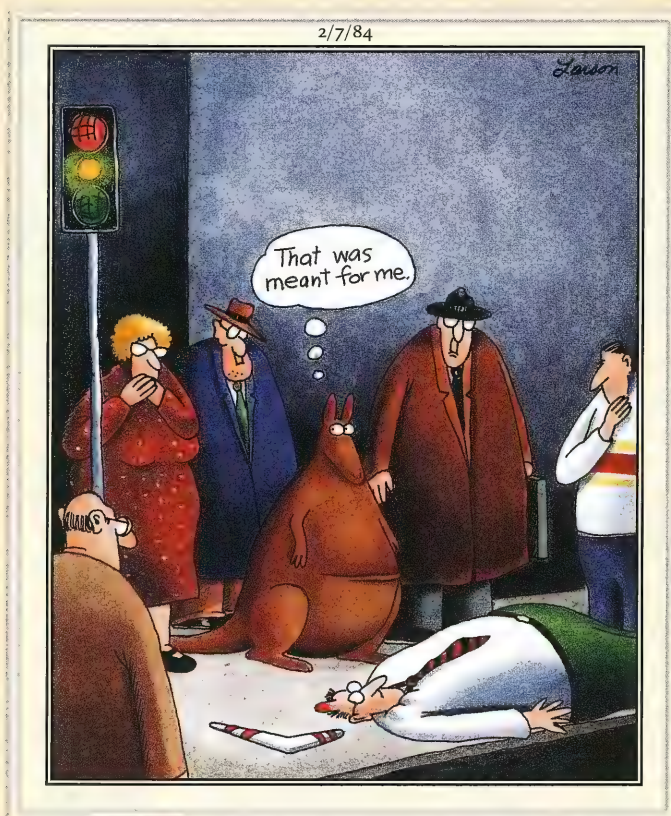
"Take another memo, Miss Wilkens. ... I want to see all reptile personnel in my office first thing tomorrow morning!"



"Irwin, you're nothing but a spineless, slimy, gelatinous blob. ... There, I've finally said it."

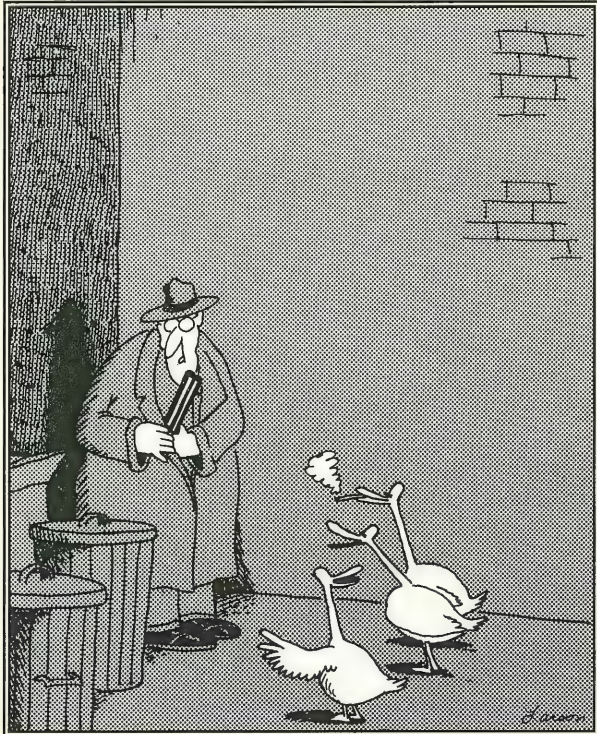


"Well, this is great. ... Some imbecile has taken the key from under the mat!"



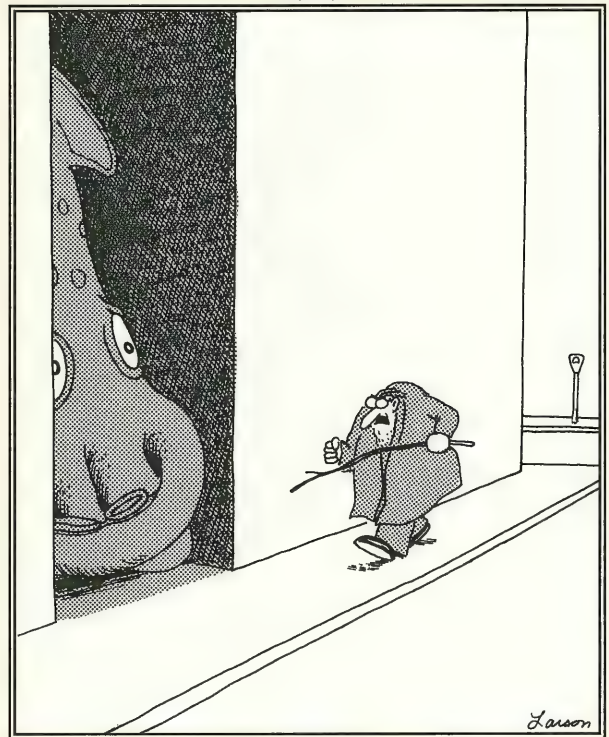
"Vernon! That light! ... The Jeffersons' dog is back!"

2/13/84



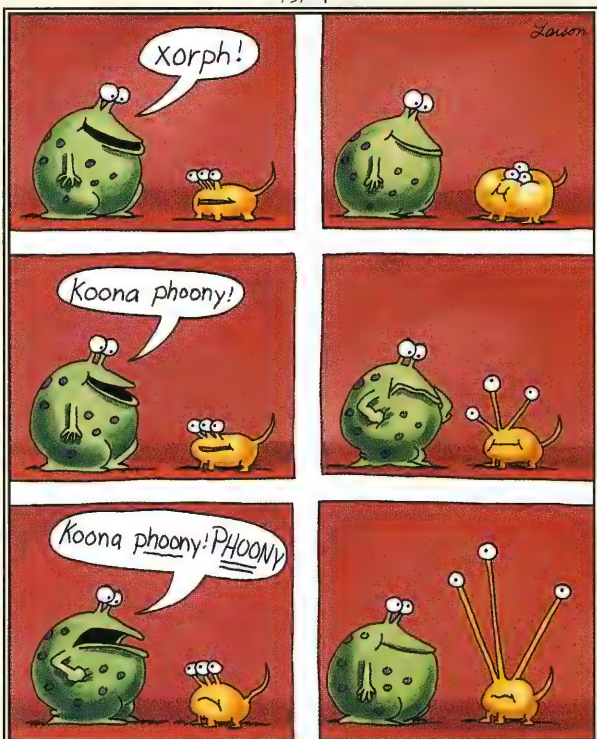
Cornered by the street ducks, Phil wasn't exactly sure what to do—and then he remembered his 12 gauge.

2/17/84



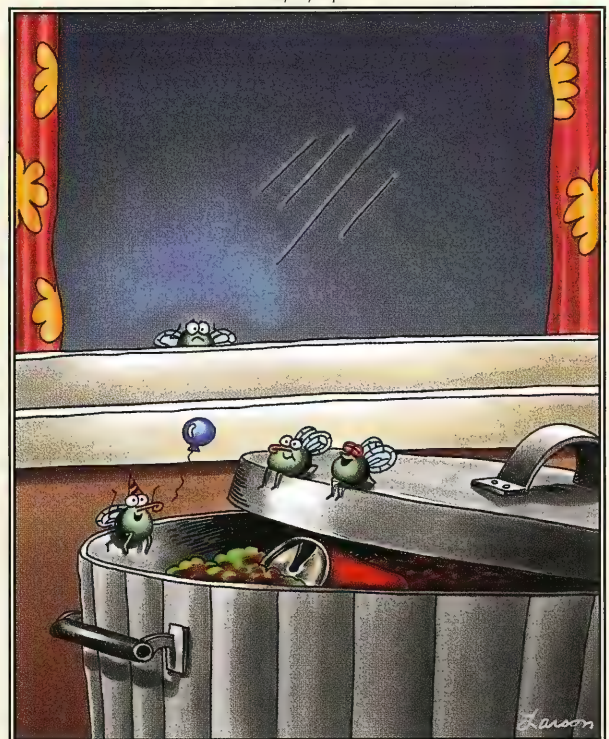
"I've had it! This time I've really had it! ... Jump the fence again, will he? ... Dang!"

2/9/84



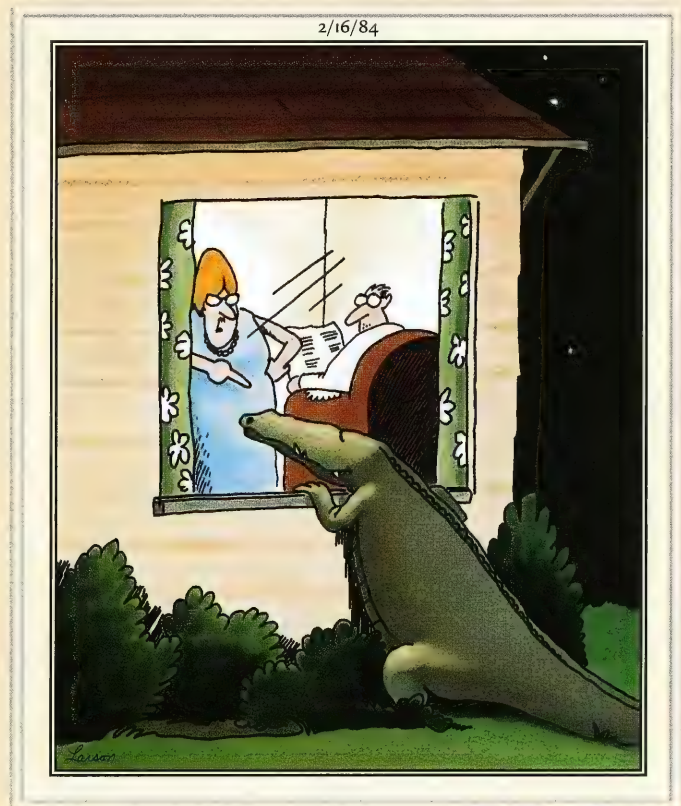
Pet tricks on other planets

2/10/84

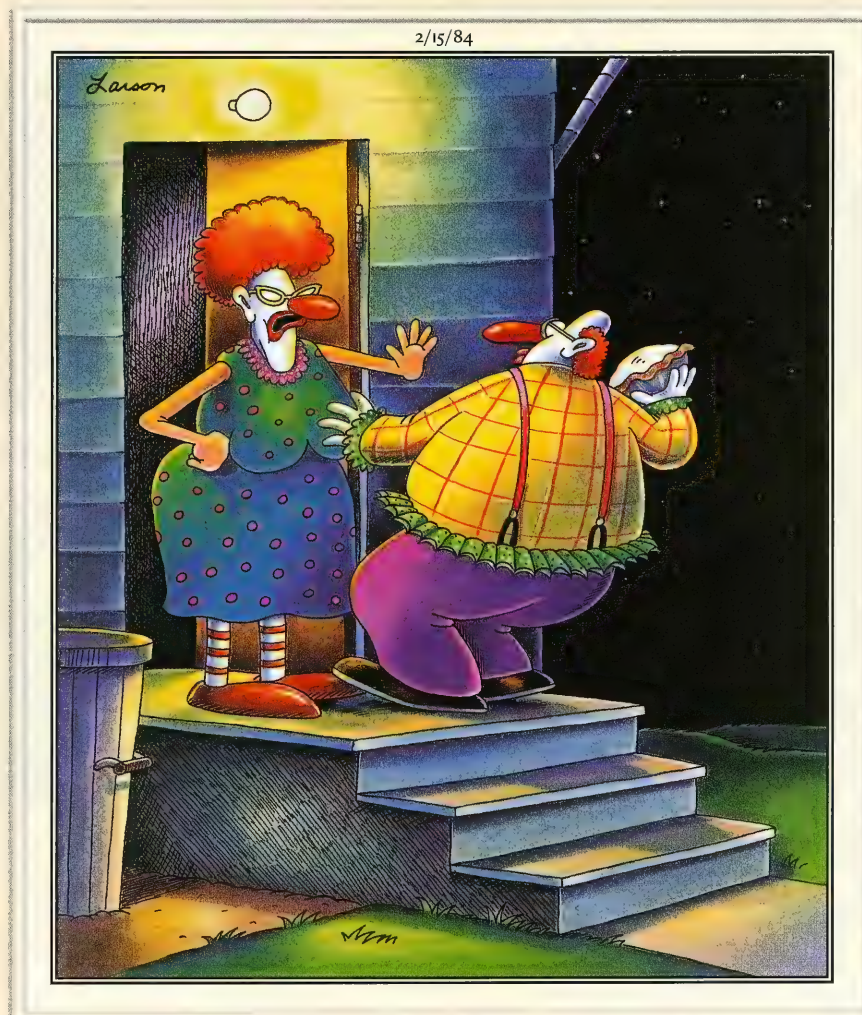




"Here's the last entry in Carlson's journal:
'Having won their confidence, tomorrow
I shall test the humor of these giant
but gentle primates with a simple
joy-buzzer handshake.'"



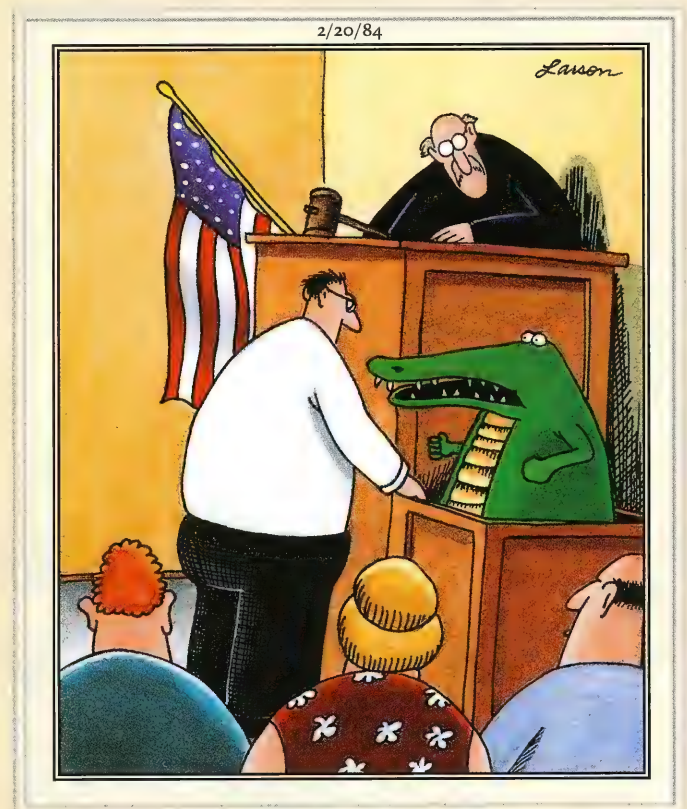
"It's back, Arnie! Okay—get the book! ... We're
gonna settle whether it's an alligator or a
crocodile once and for all!"



"Hold it right there, Charles! ... Not on our first date,
you don't!"



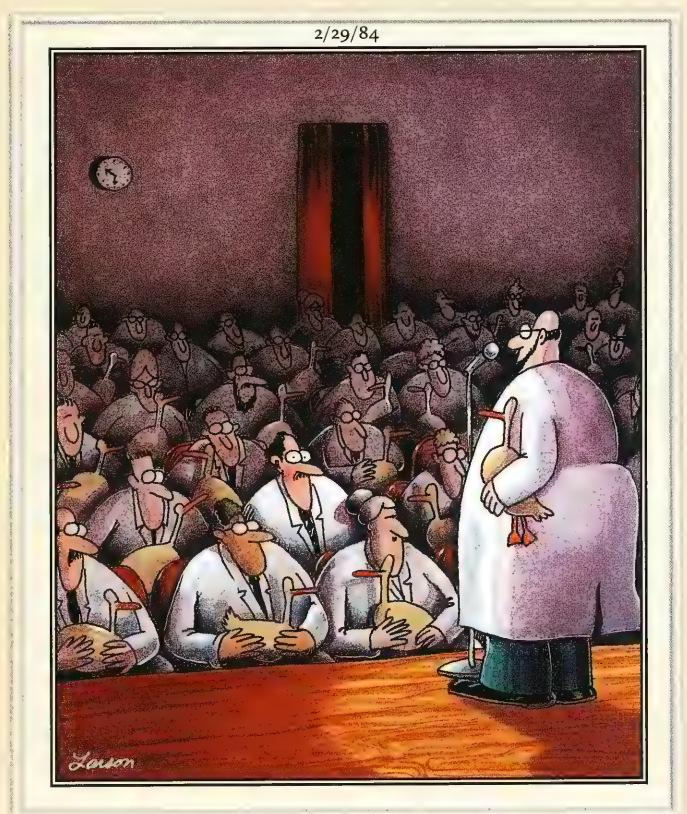
"You fool! 'Bring the honey,' I said. ...
This isn't the same thing!"



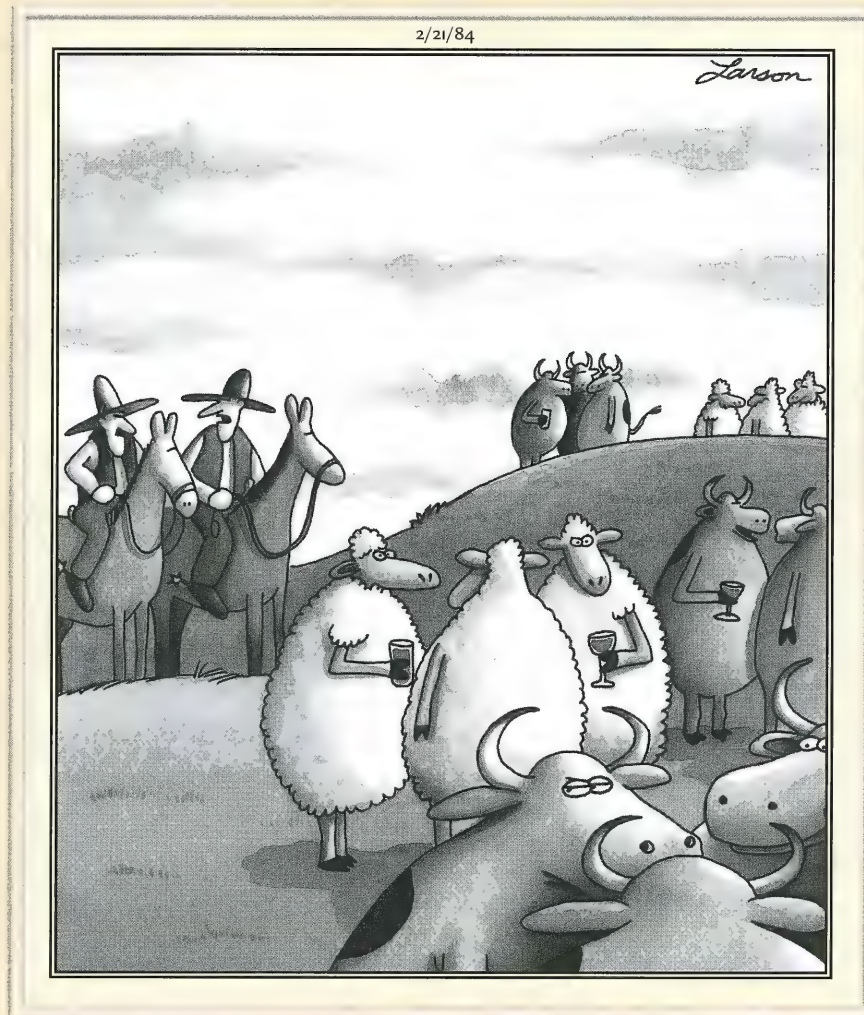
"Well, of course I did it in cold blood,
you idiot! ... I'm a reptile!"



"Well, you've overslept and missed your
vine again."



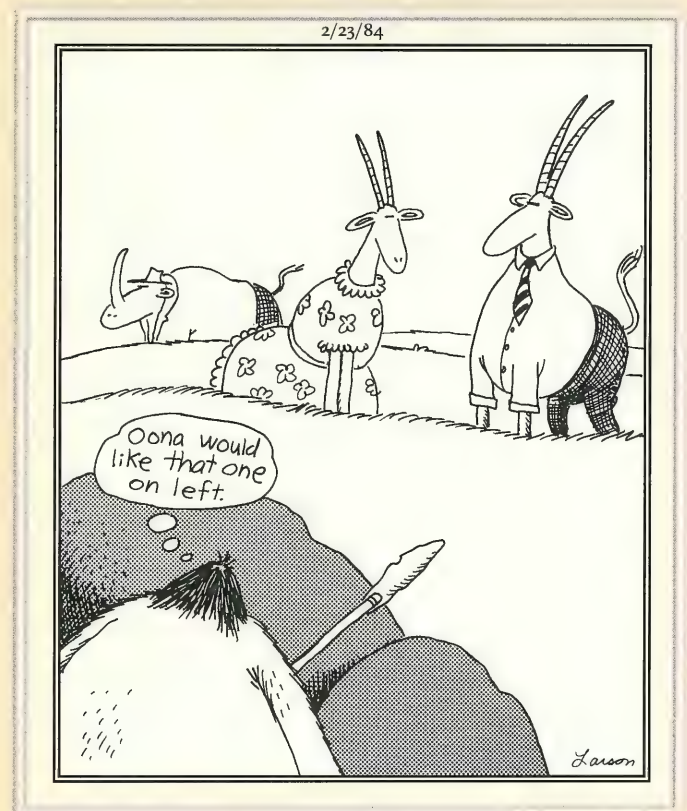
Suddenly, Professor Liebowitz realizes he has
come to the seminar without his duck.



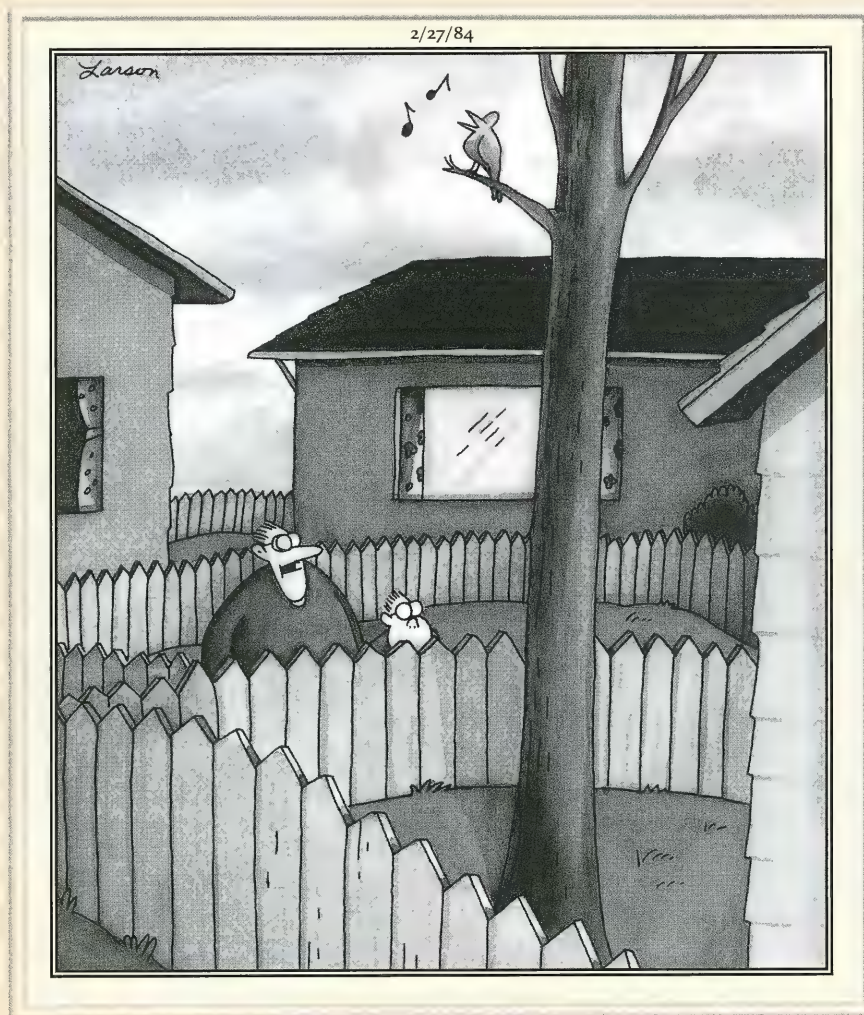
“Well, what have I always said?... Sheep and cattle just don’t mix.”



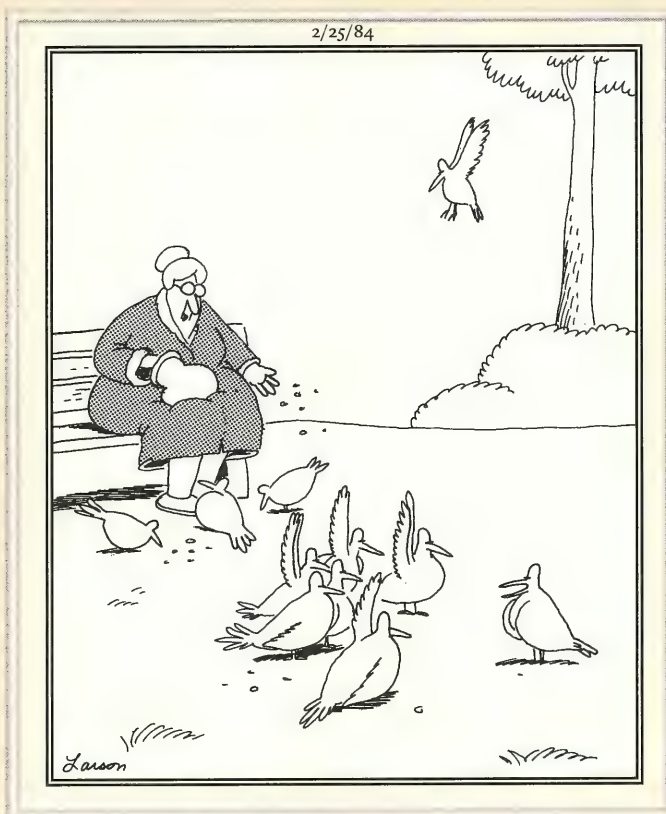
“Aaaaaaa! ... No, Zooky! Grok et bok! ... Shoosh! Shoosh! ...”



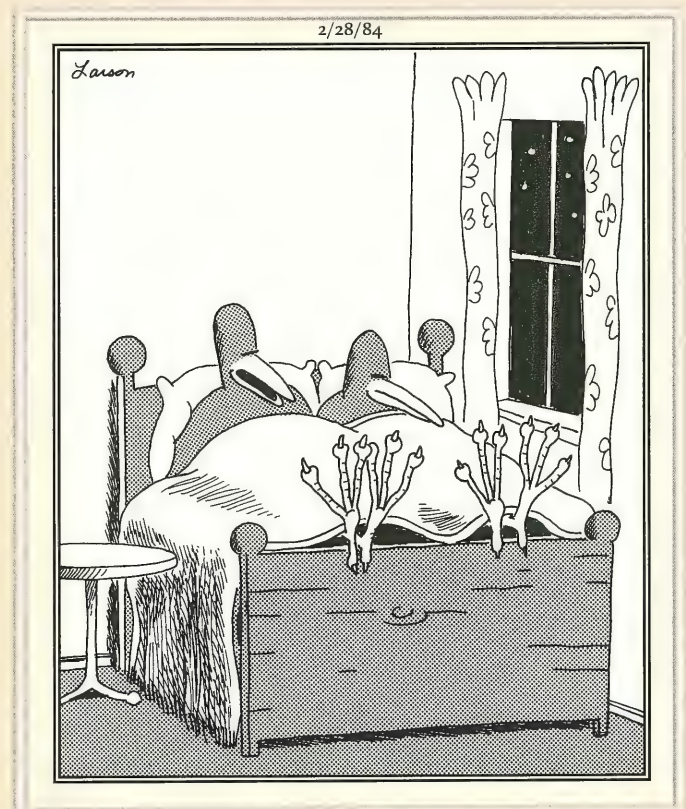
The origin of clothes



"And now, Randy, by use of song, the male sparrow will stake out his territory ... an instinct common in the lower animals."



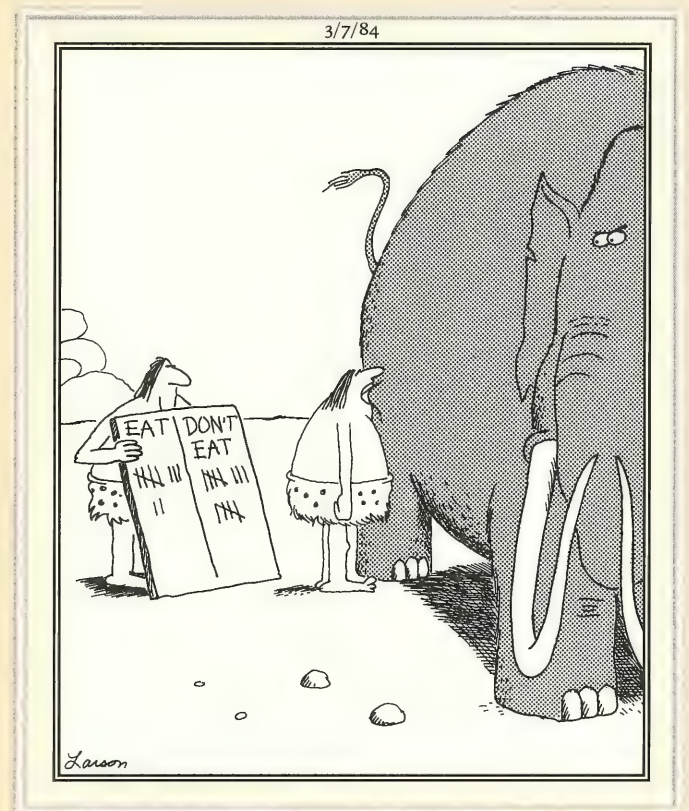
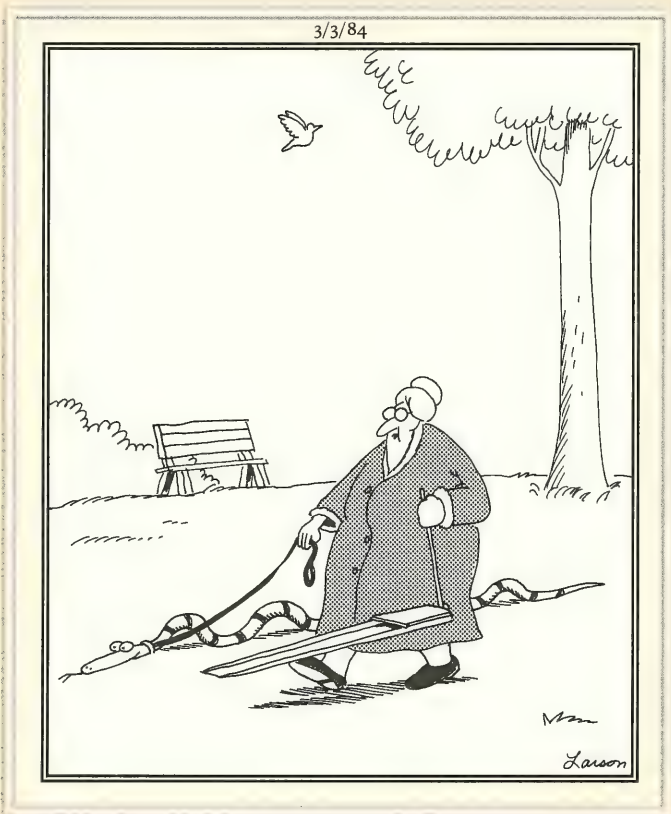
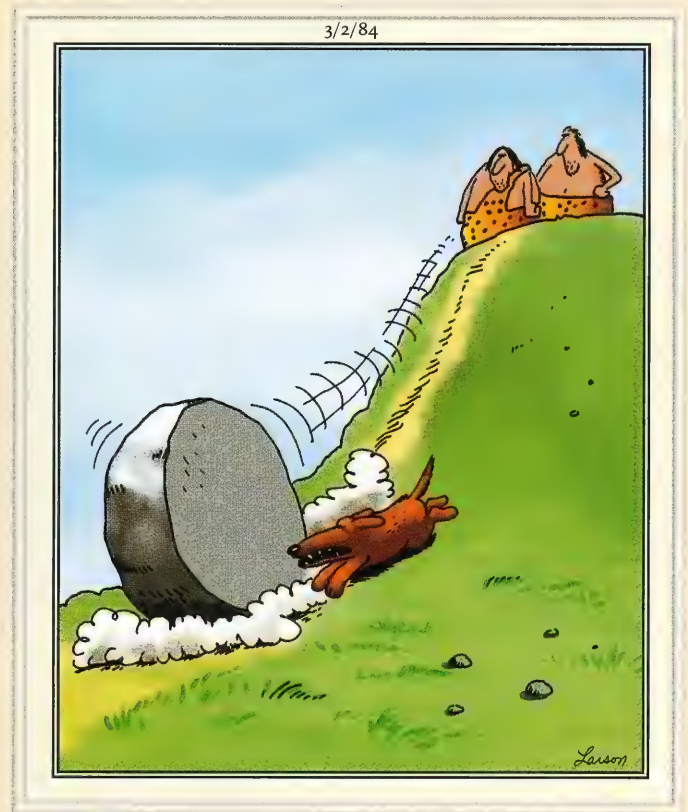
"I've got an idea. ... How many here have ever seen Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*?"



"Well, I dunno, Warren ... I think your feet may be uglier than mine."



"What the? ... Another little casket?"

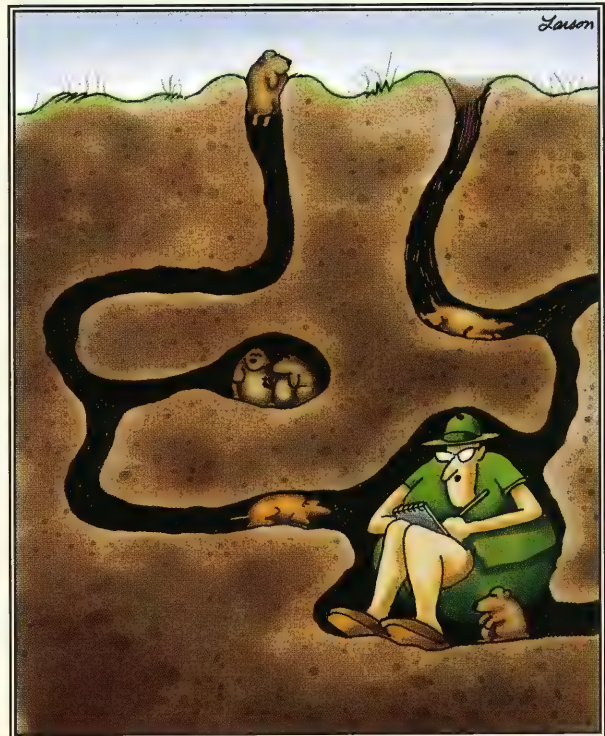


3/9/84



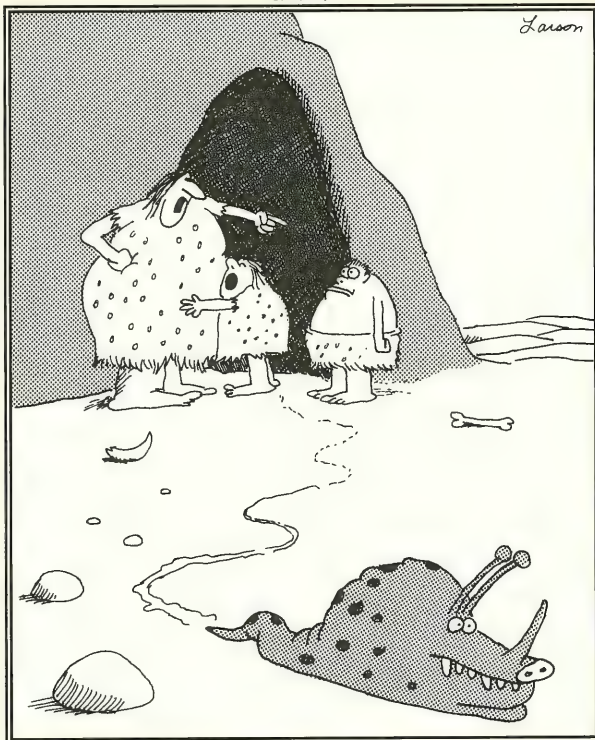
"Aaaaaaaa! ... It's George! He's taking it with him!"

3/5/84



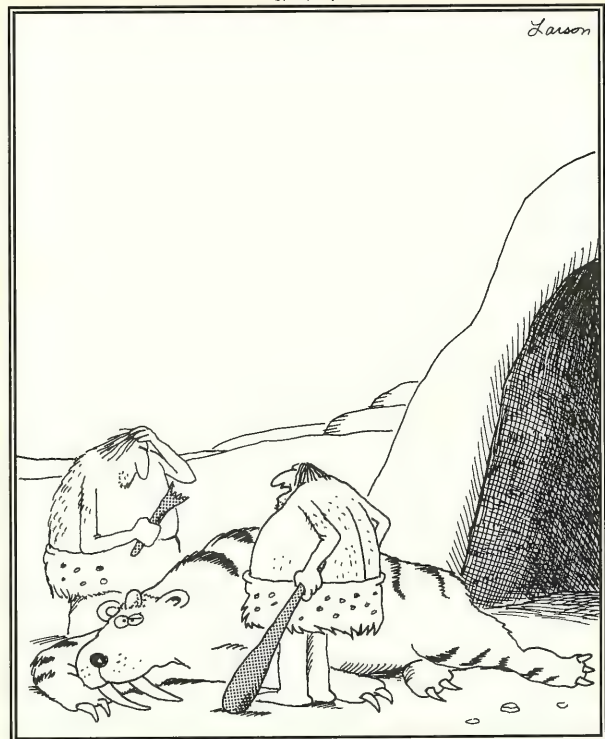
"March 5, 1984: After several months, I now feel that these strange little rodents have finally accepted me as one of their own."

3/8/84



"Grobby! Bad! ... Not put things down Oona's back no more!"

3/10/84



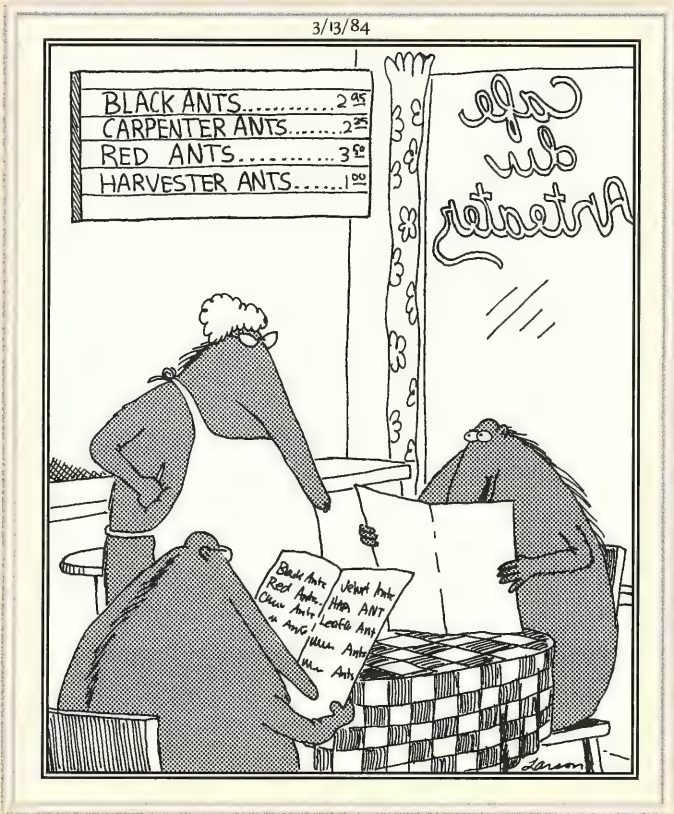
"Always keep label up, Dag."



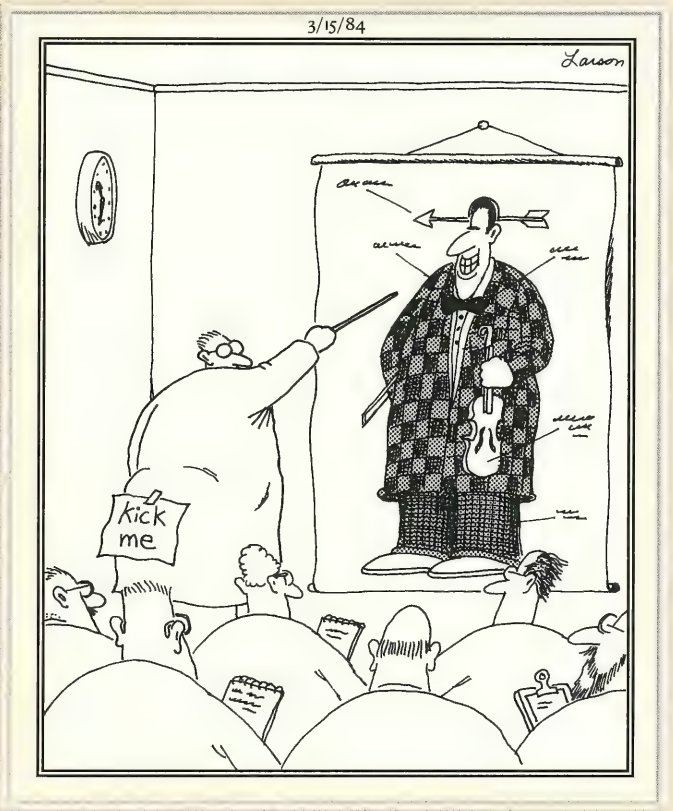
Snake dreams



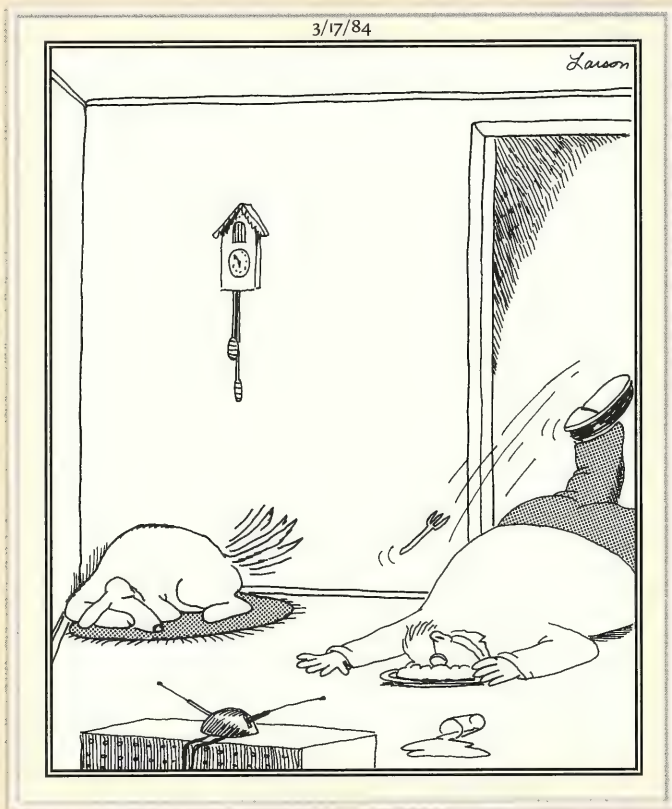
"And now Edgar's gone. ... Something's going on around here."



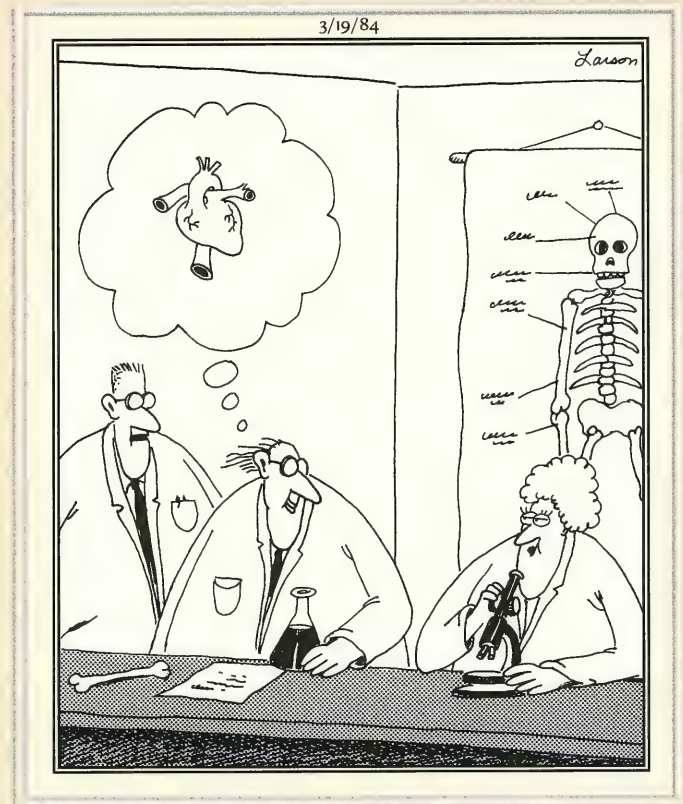
"Hmmm. ... Are the red ants right off the hill?"



Analyzing humor



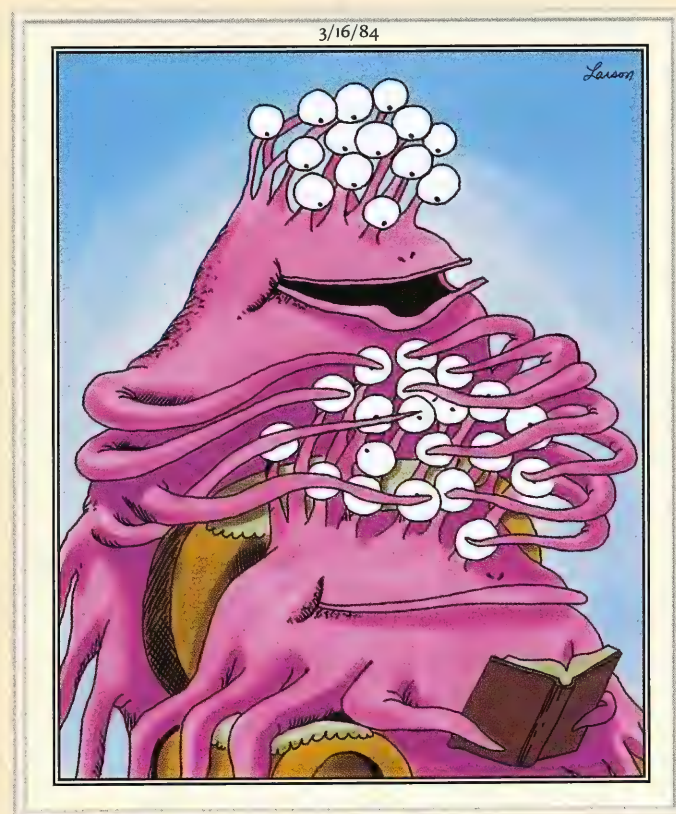
Stimulus-response behavior in dogs



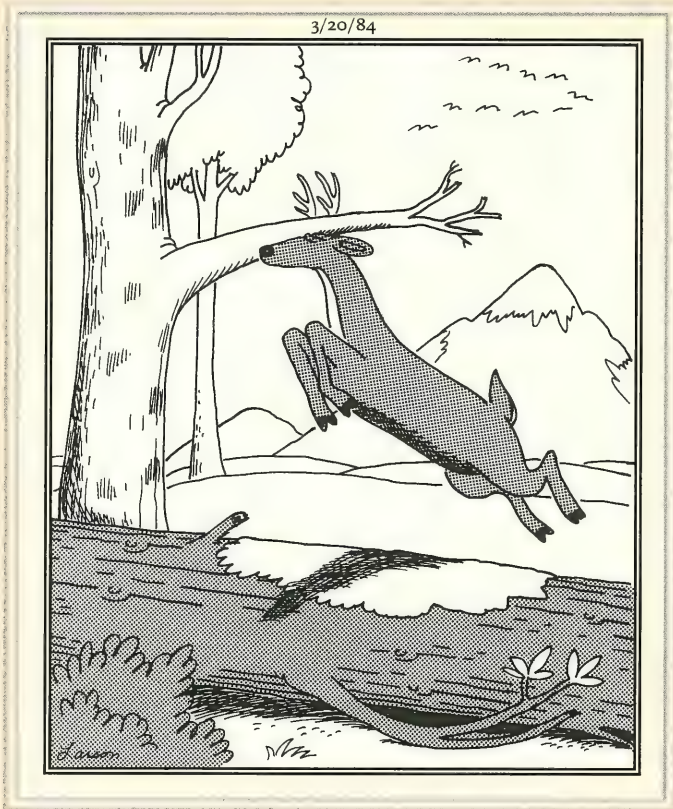
"I believe, Farnsworth, that the data from the previous tissue sample was ... Farnsworth! Are you listening to me?"



"Oh, that's right! You *did* have a hat. ... I believe you'll find it in the other room."



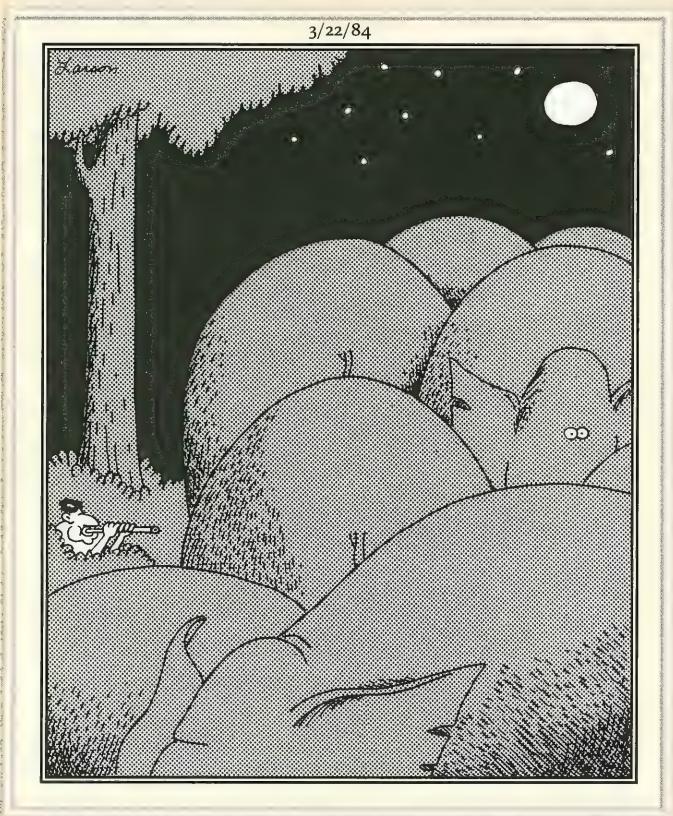
"Guess who!"



Nature scenes we rarely see



"That time was just too close, George! ...
Jimmy was headed straight for the
snake-pit when I grabbed him!"



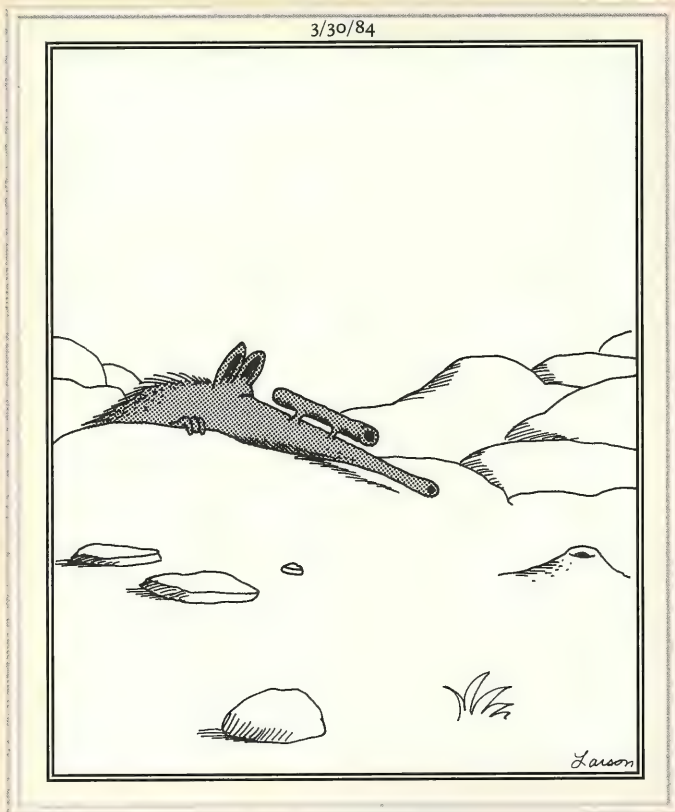
"Listen ... you've got to relax. ... The more you
think about changing colors, the less chance
you'll succeed. ... Shall we try the green
background again?"



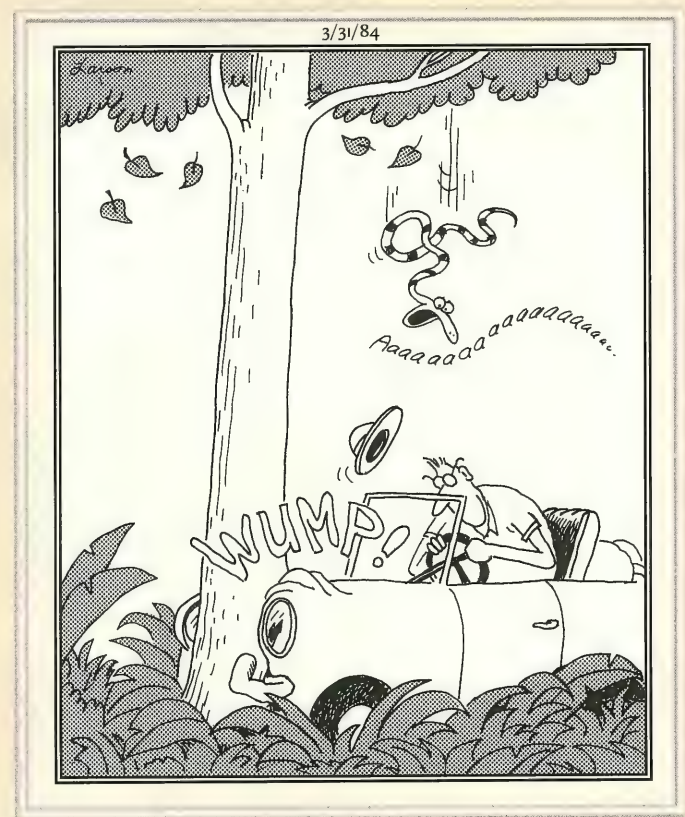
The birth of jazz

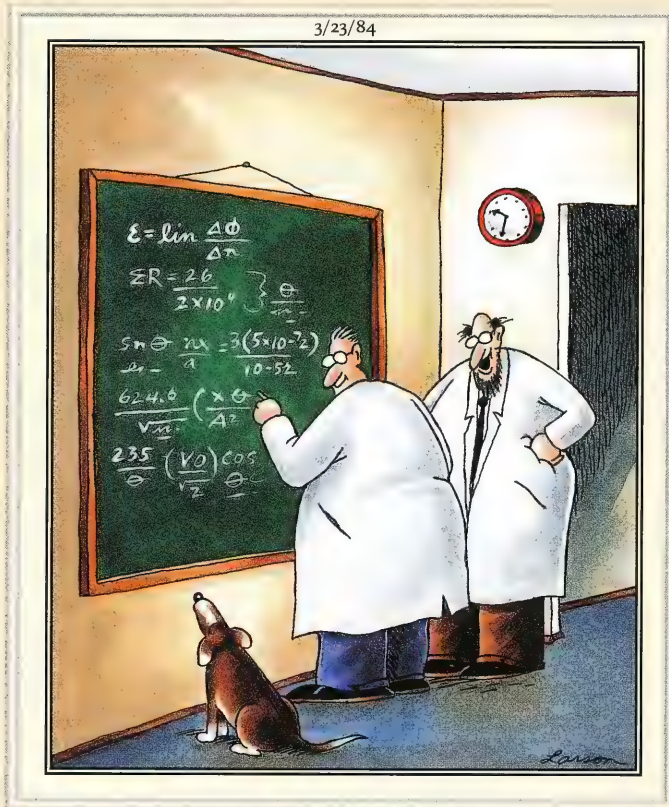


Humor in the Old West

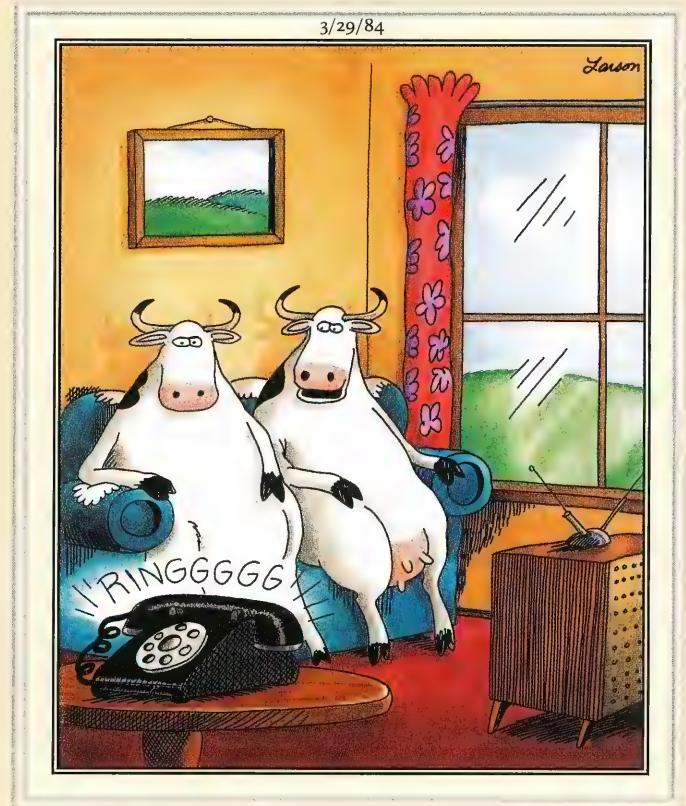


Anteaters of the future

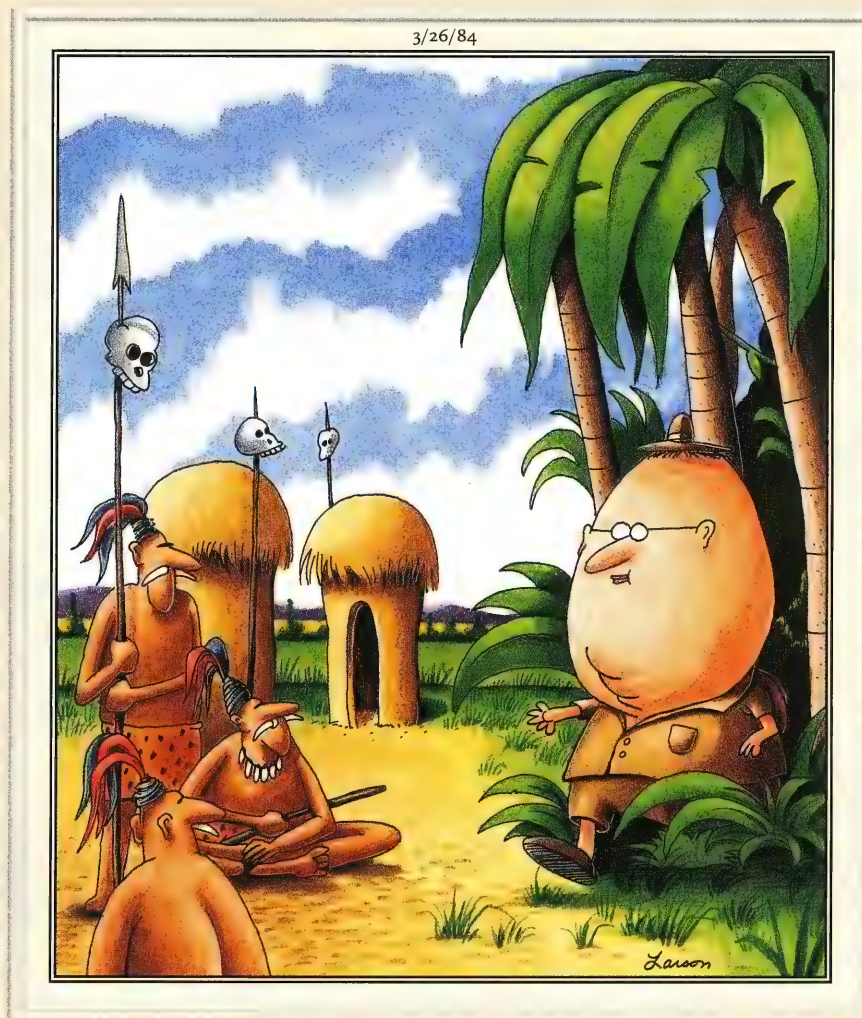




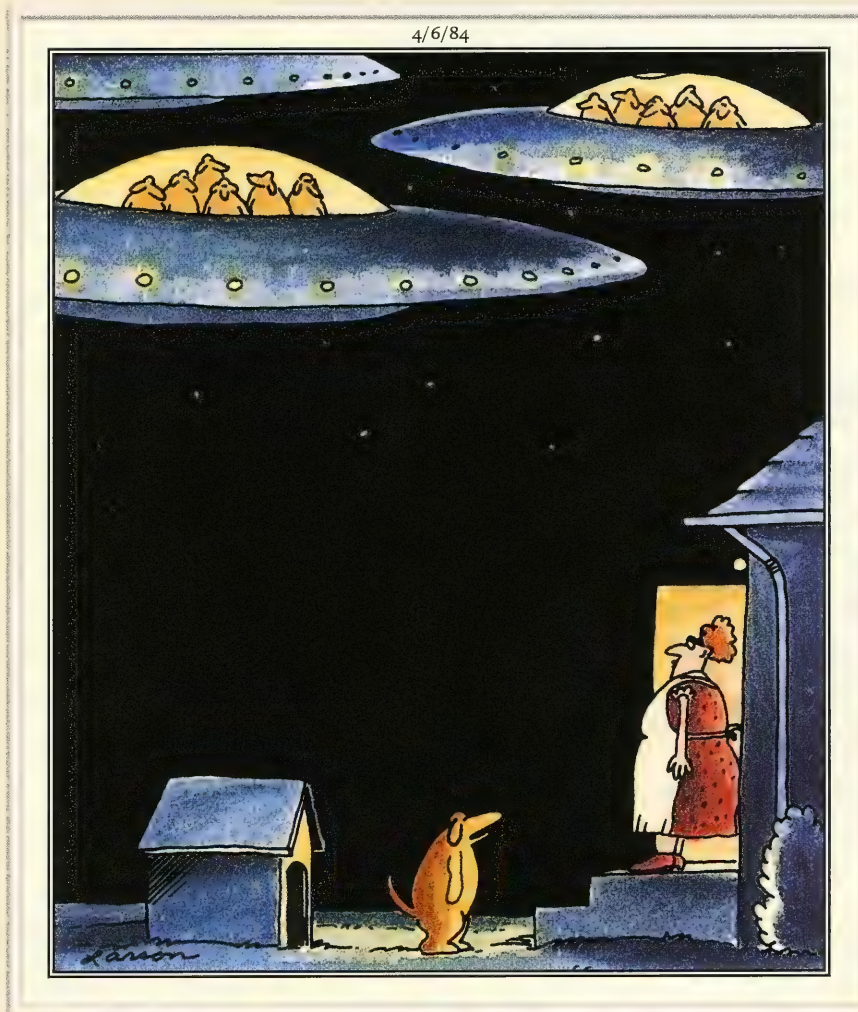
"Ohhhhhhh. ... Look at that, Schuster. ...
Dogs are so cute when they try to
comprehend quantum mechanics."



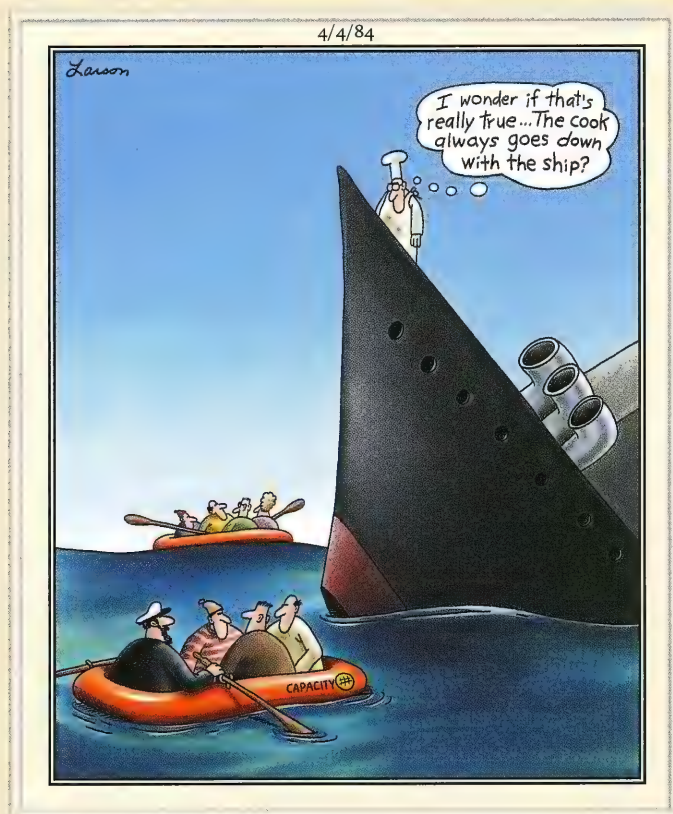
"Well, there it goes again. ... And we just sit
here without opposable thumbs."



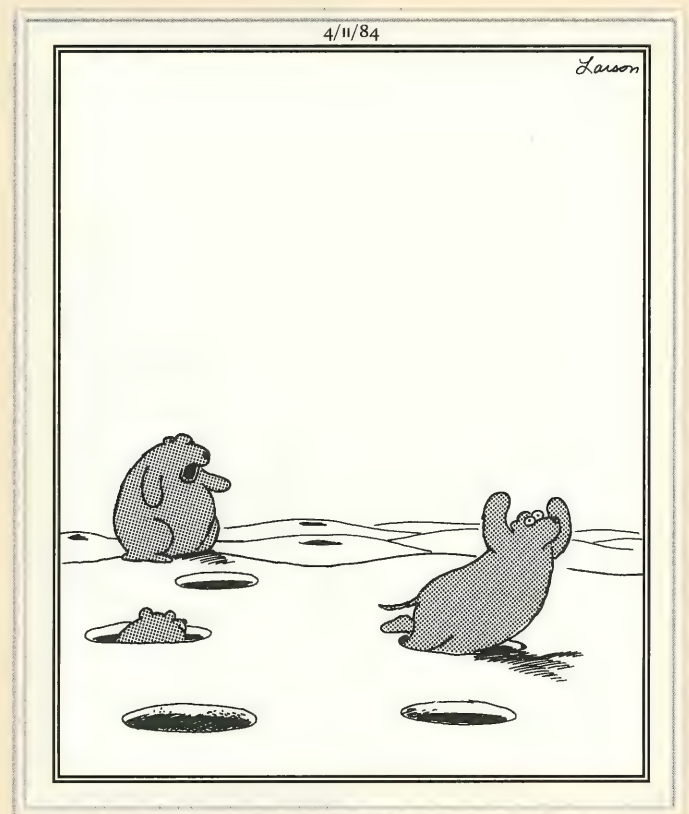
Unwittingly, Palmer stepped out of the jungle
and into headhunter folklore forever.



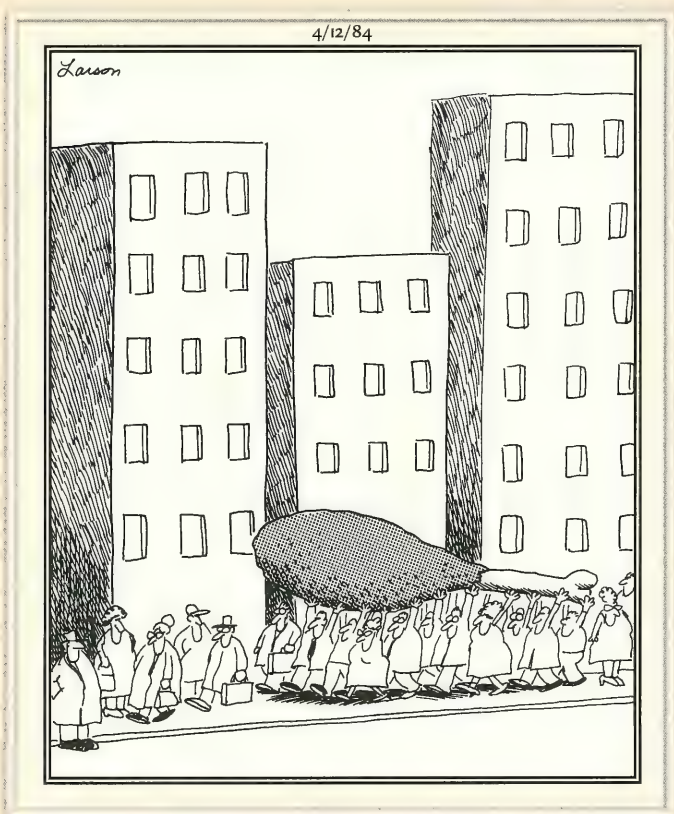
"Well, they finally came ... but before I go, let's see you roll over a couple times."



Humor at its lowest form



"Carl! Watch for holes!"



How social animals work together



Releasing the shaft, Red Bear falls victim to the old fake-bow-and-arrow trick.

4/7/84



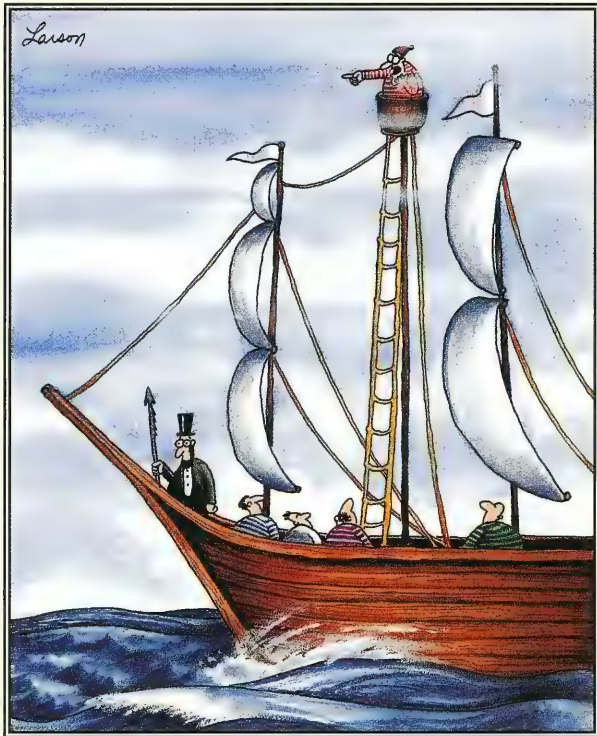


"Well, there is some irony in all this, you know. ... I mean, we *both* lose a contact at the same time?!"



"Aha! As I always suspected! ... I better not ever catch you drinking right from the bottle *again!*"

4/18/84



"The white whale! The whiiiiite wh ... no, no ... my mistake! ... A black whale! A regular, blaaaaaack whale!"

4/17/84

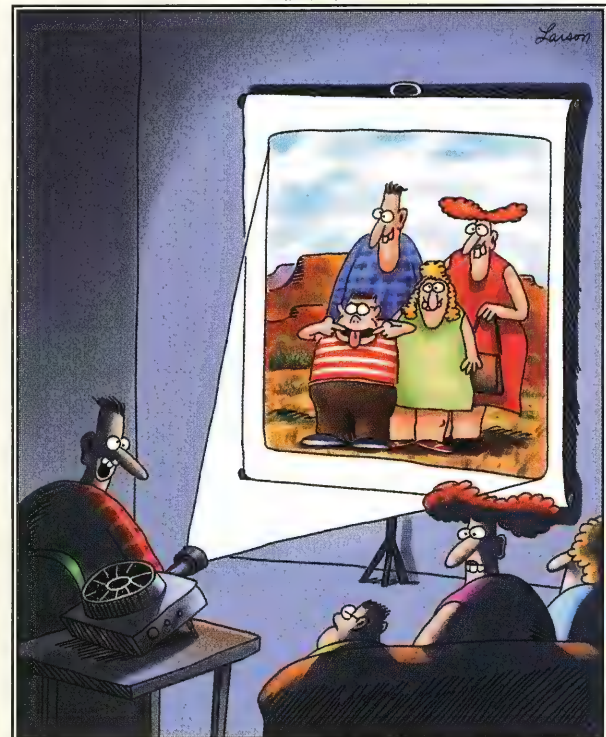


4/19/84

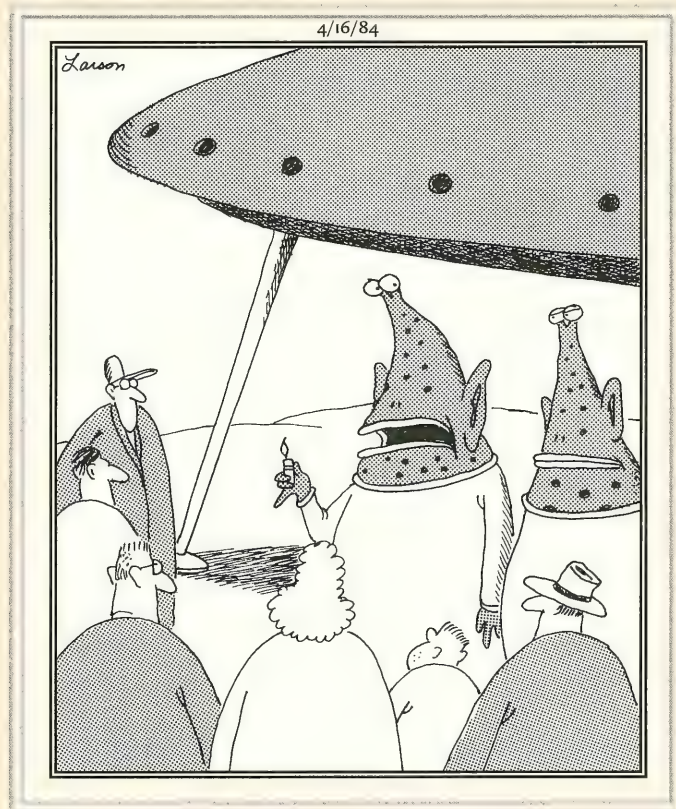


"So! They're back, are they?"

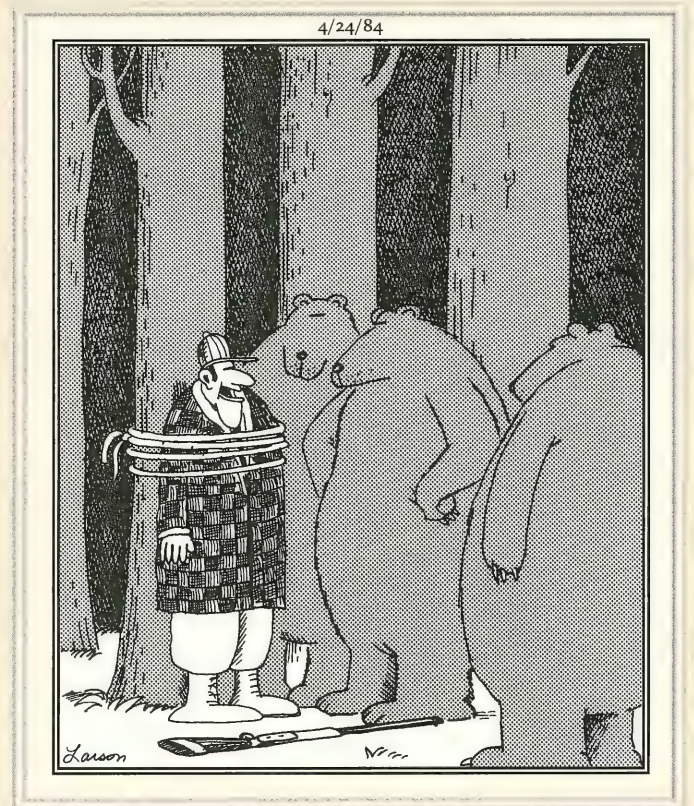
4/21/84



"Well, here we all are at the Grand Canyon ... but, as usual, Johnny just had to ruin the picture for everyone else."

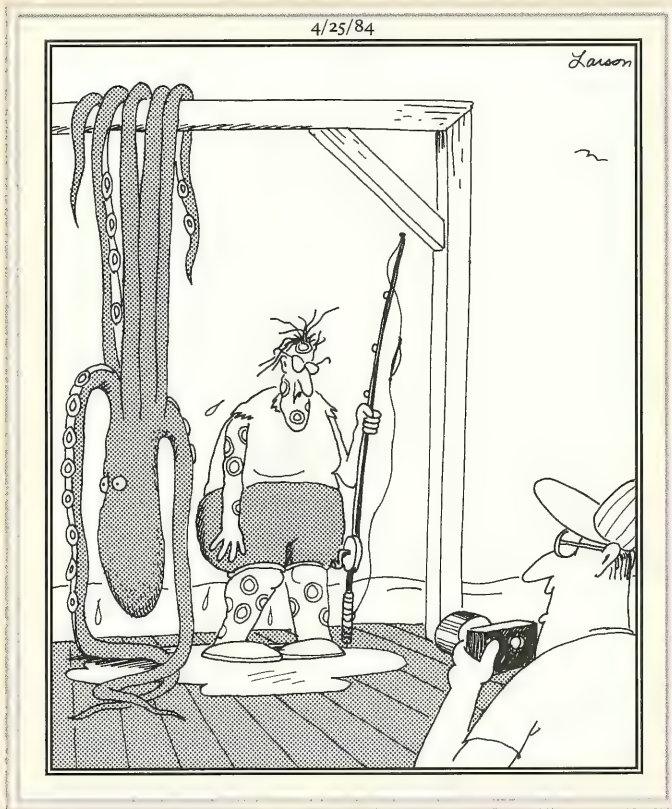


"Well, they're unimpressed. ... And now what are we going to do with fifty cases of butane lighters?"

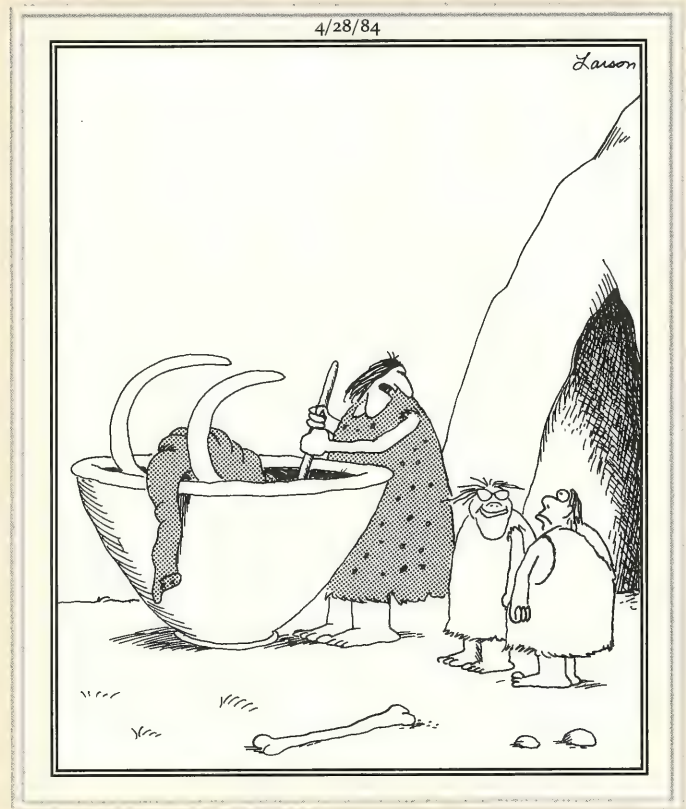


"Do what you will to me, but I'll never talk! ... NEVER! And, after me, there'll come others—and others—and others! Ha ha ha!"





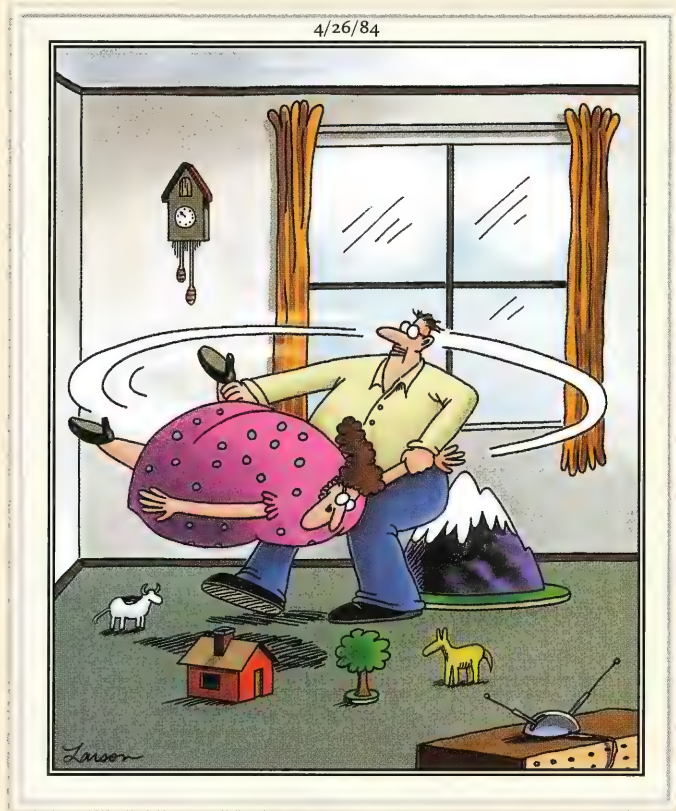
"Oo! I know, Doris! ... Drape one of his arms over your shoulder!"



"No, Zak. ... It Wilga's turn lick bowl."



Trying to calm the herd, Jake himself was suddenly awestruck by the image of beauty and unbridled fury on the cliff above. Pink Shadow had returned.



On the next pass, however, Helen failed to clear the mountains.

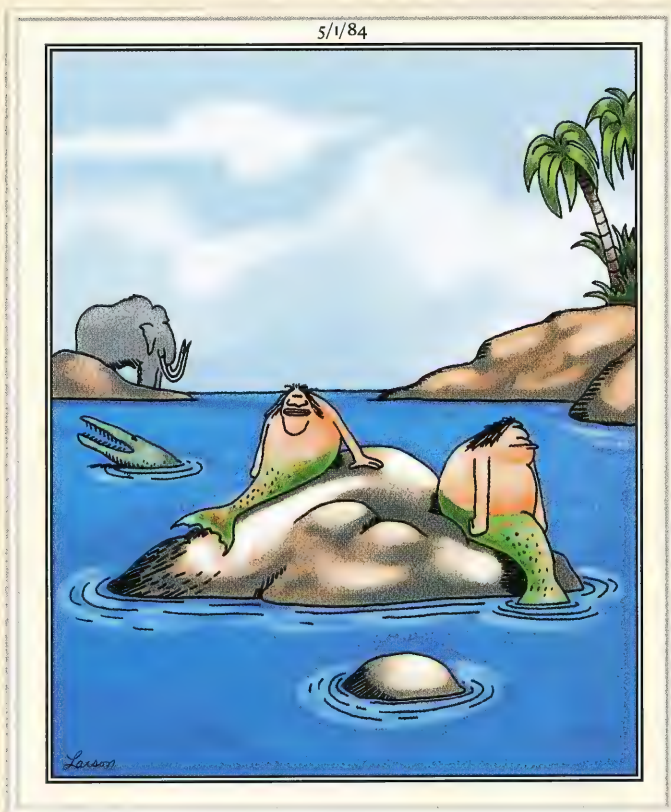


“What have I told you about eating in bed?”

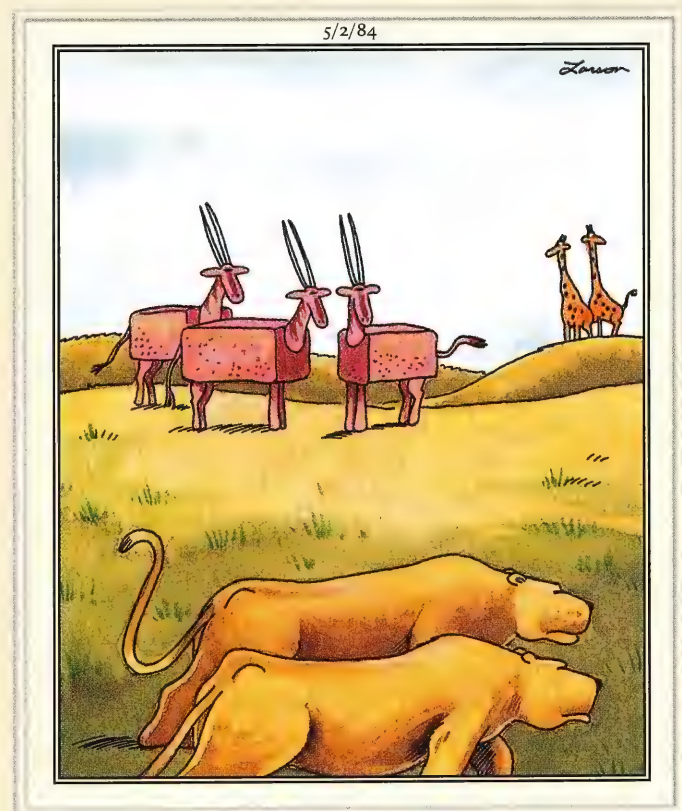




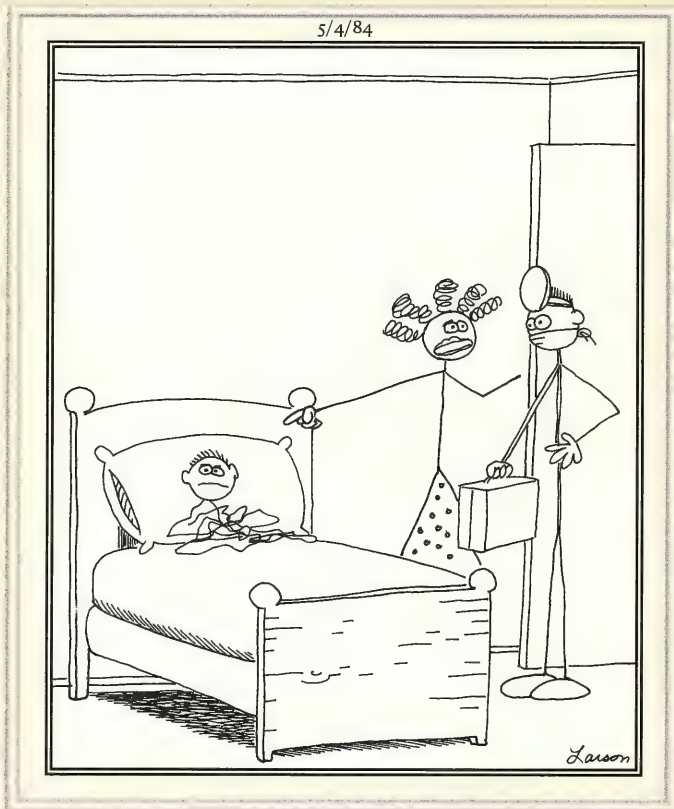
"You know what I'm sayin'? ... Me, for example. I couldn't work in some stuffy little office. ... The outdoors just calls to me."



Early Pleistocene mermaids



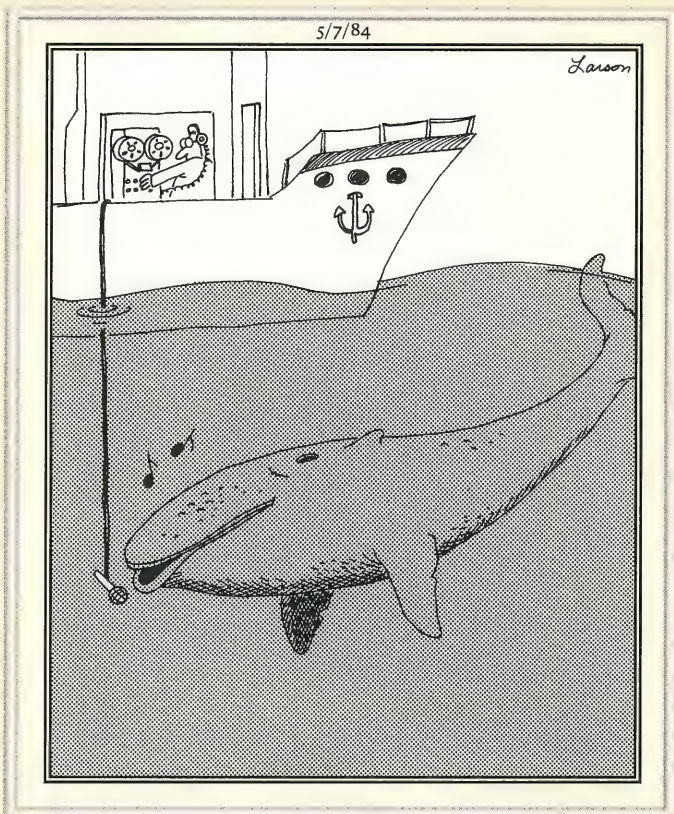
Knowing the lion's preference for red meat, the spamalopes remained calm but wary.



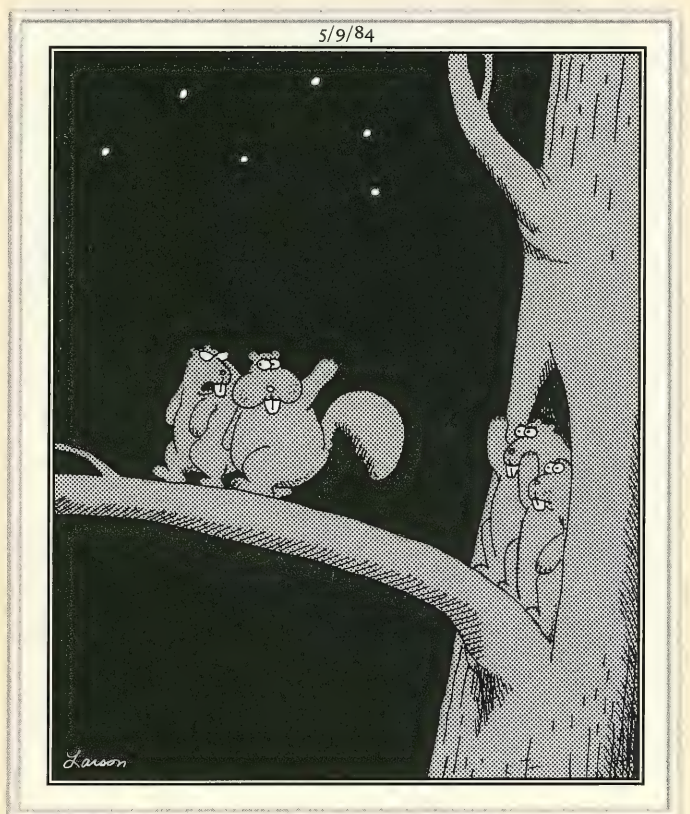
"Thank goodness you're here, Doctor! ...
I came in this morning and found Billy
just all scribbled like this!"



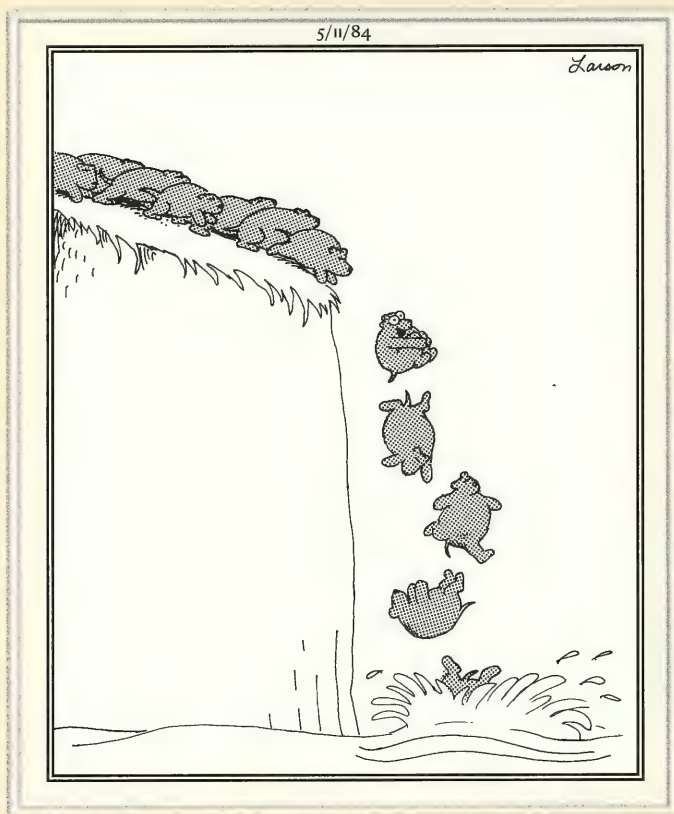
The Boy Who Cried "No Brakes"



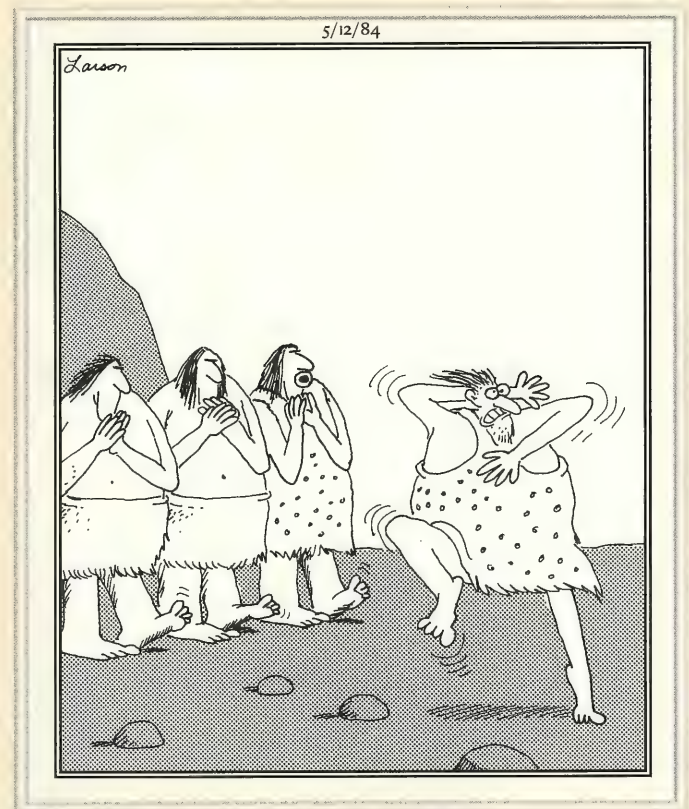
"A Louie, Louie ... wowoooo ...
we gotta go now ..."



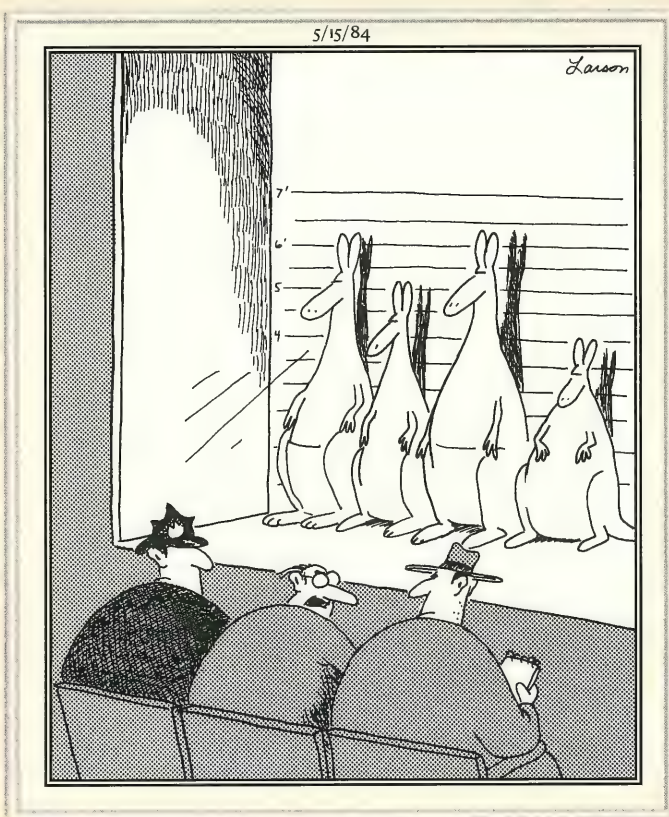
"I've never been so embarrassed. ... After dinner,
you just never gave up trying to cram the
world into your cheek pouches!"



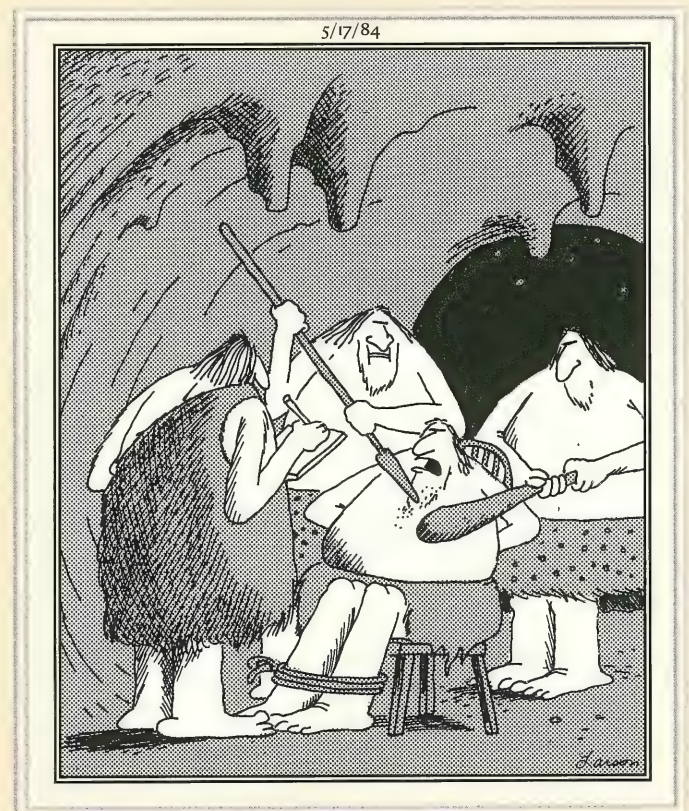
"CANNONBAAAAAAAAALLLLLLLLLL!"



Grog Schwartz eats some bad beetle grubs, and the art of dance is born.



"Don't rush me! Don't rush me! ... I've *always* gotten my kangaroos and wallabies confused!"



"Okay! I'll talk! I'll talk! ... Take two sticks of approximately equal size and weight—rub them together at opposing angles using short, brisk strokes ..."

5/8/84



Early vegetarians returning from the kill

5/10/84



"Ladies! Ladies! He's back! ... Our mystery man who does the Donald Duck impression!"

5/18/84



"Quit complaining and eat it! ... Number one, chicken soup is good for the flu, and number two, it's nobody we know."

5/14/84



"So tell us, Buffy—for how long have you been a talking dog?"

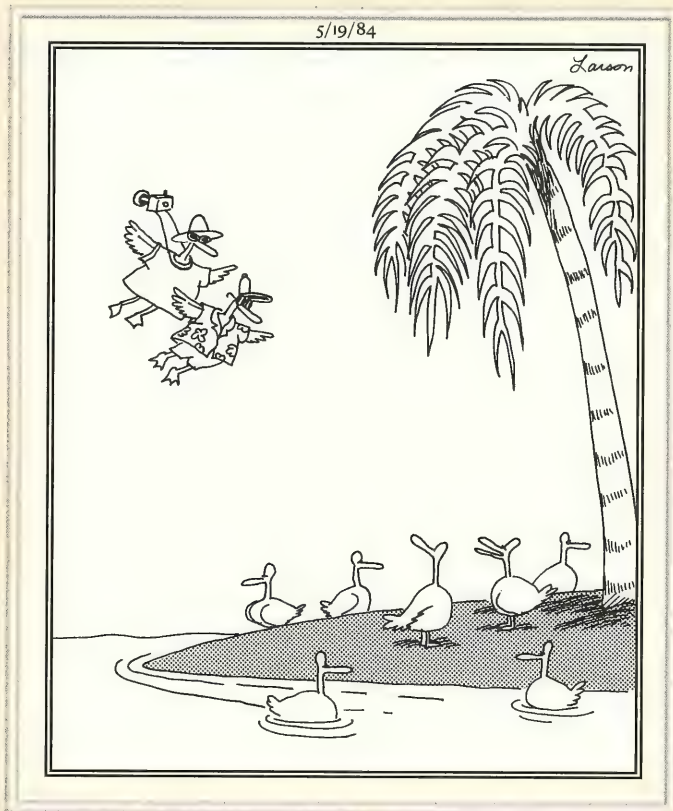
5/21/84



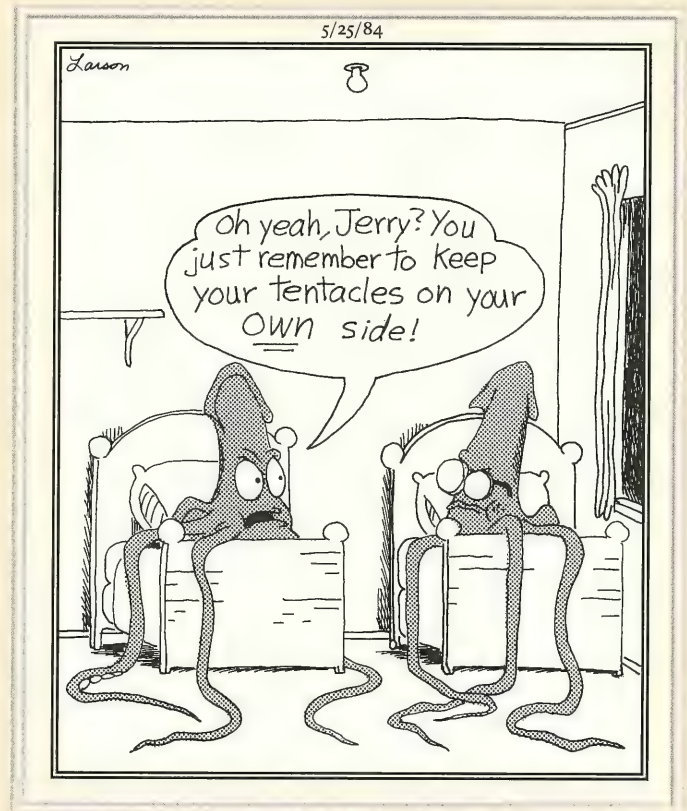
One day, as he nonchalantly reaches for a match, Leonardo da Vinci's life is suddenly transformed.

5/16/84

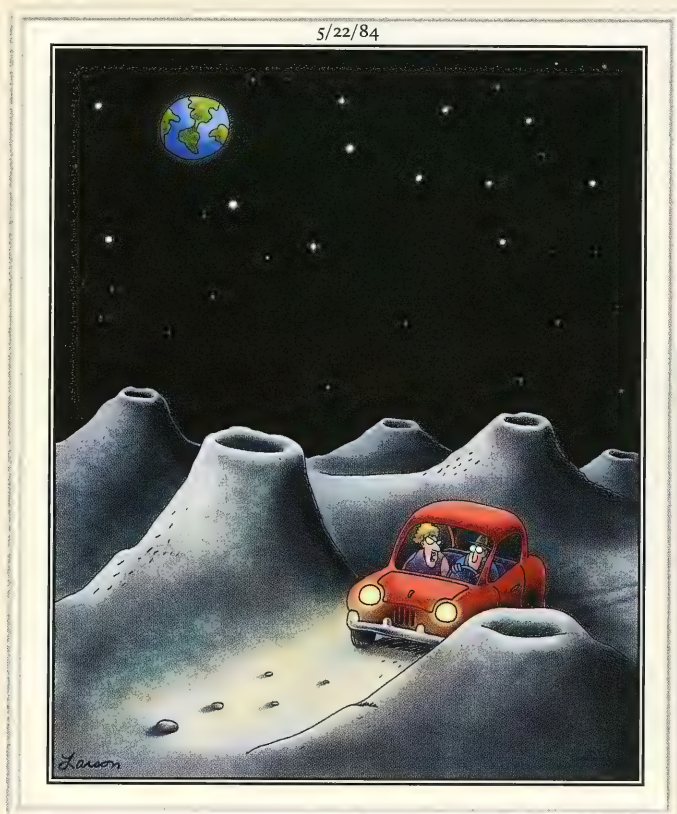




"Well, more arrivals from the States, I see."



The Squid kids at home



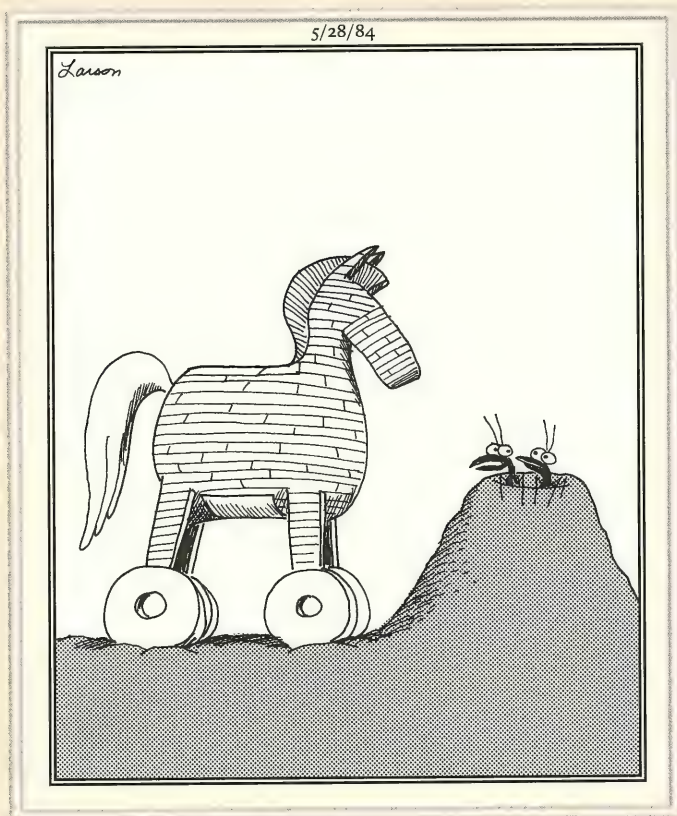
"For heaven's sake, Elroy! Now look where the earth is! ... Move over and let me drive!"



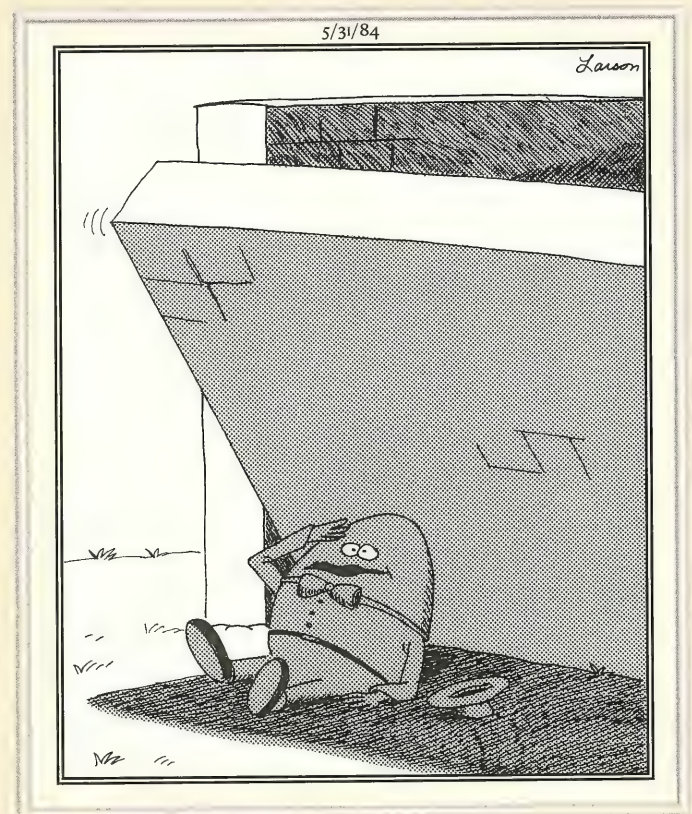
Dog Stooges



Hank knew this place well. He need only wait. ...
The deer would come, the deer would come.



"I don't know about this. ... The red ants
never gave us anything before."



"Well, I'll be danged! ... I'm okay!"



"Uh-uh-uh-uh-uh. ... Question. Can anyone here tell me what Hanson there is doing wrong with his elbows?"



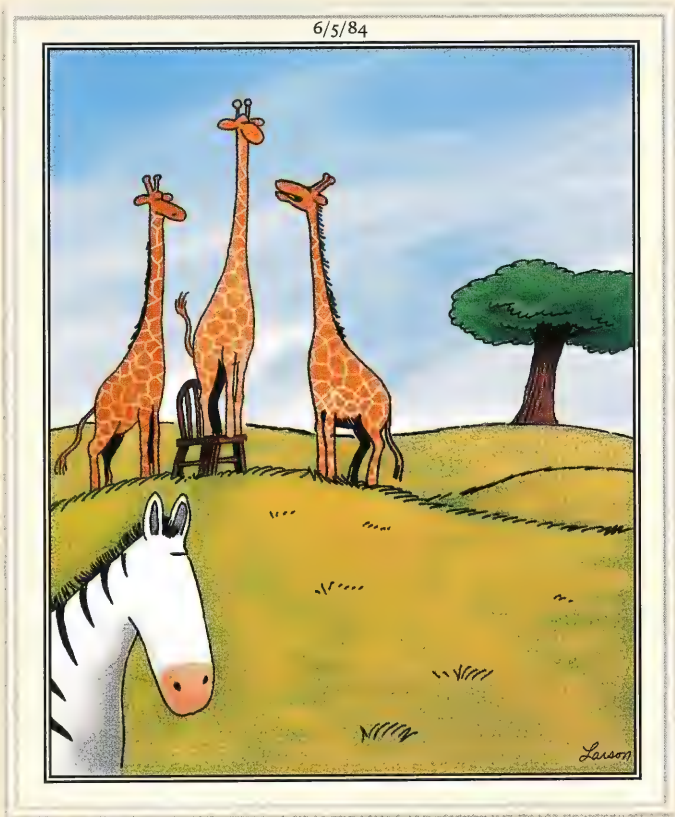
"Now calm down there ma'am ... your cat's gonna be fine ... just fine."



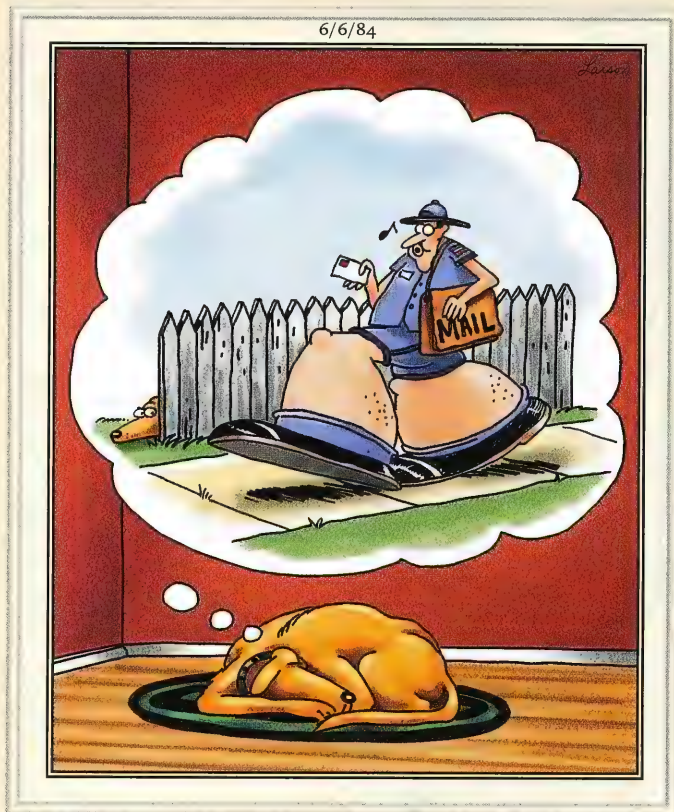
"I tell you she's drivin' me nuts! ... I come home at night and it's 'quack quack quack'... I get up in the morning and it's 'quack quack quack.'"



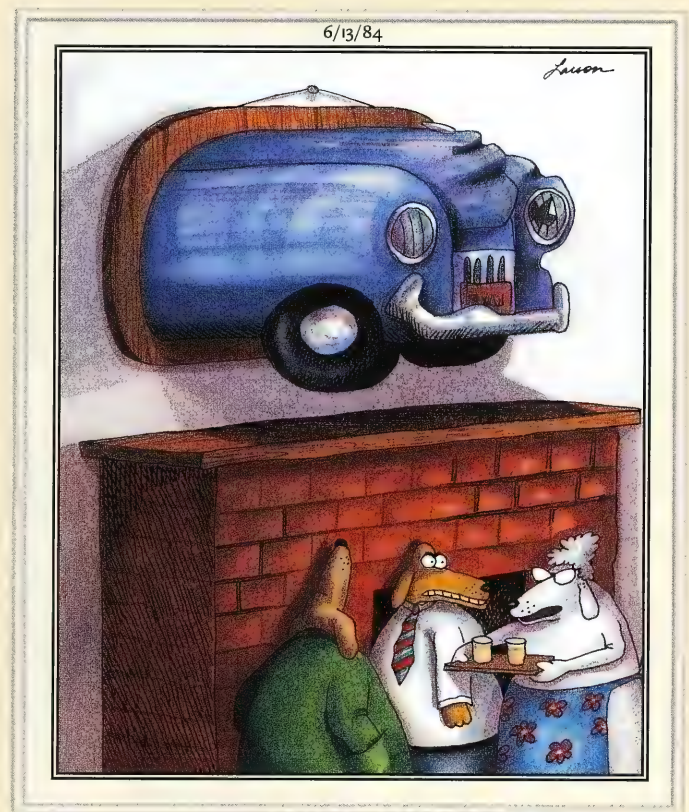
“Uh-oh.”



“No lions anywhere? ... Let me have the chair.”



What dogs dream about



"Don't listen to him, George. He didn't catch it ... the stupid thing swerved to miss him and ran into a tree."

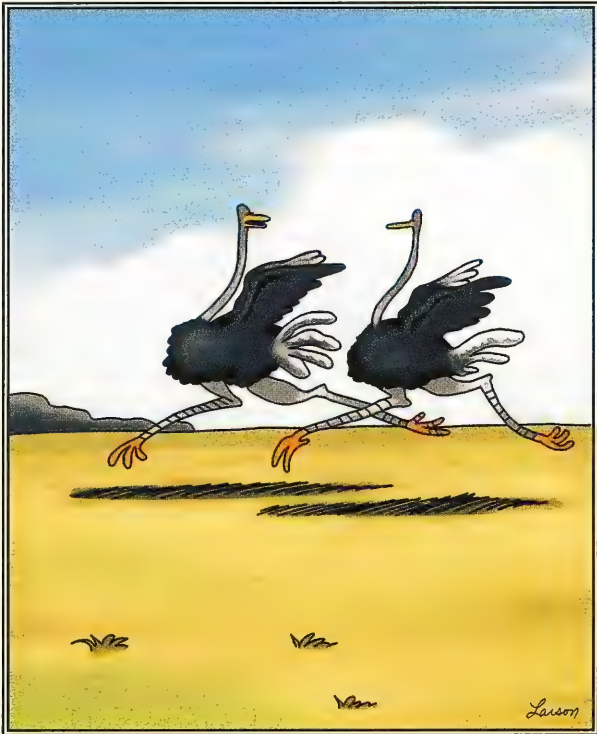


"Relax, Worthington. ... As the warm, moist air from the jungle enters the cave, the cool, denser air inside forces it to rise, resulting in turbulence that sounds not unlike heavy breathing."



Of course, the slugs worshipped their god out of fear, not love.

6/14/84

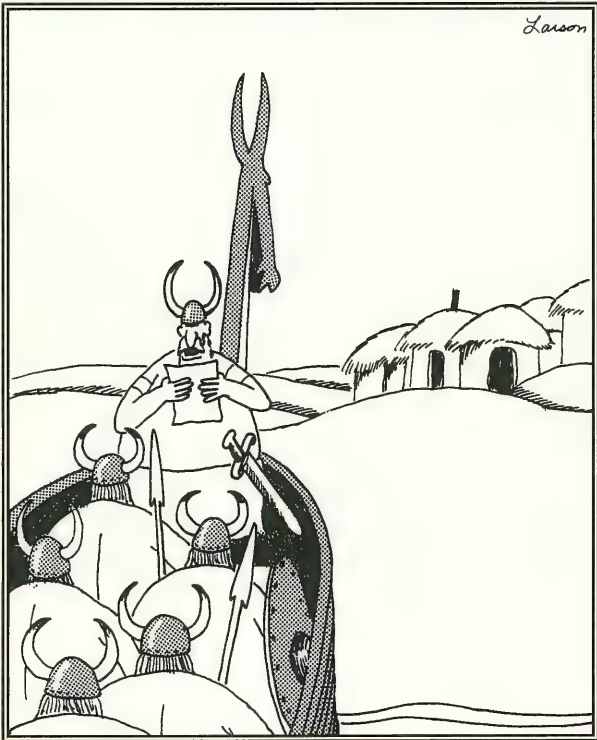


"For crying out loud, Norm. Look at you ... I hope I don't look half as goony when I run."

6/15/84

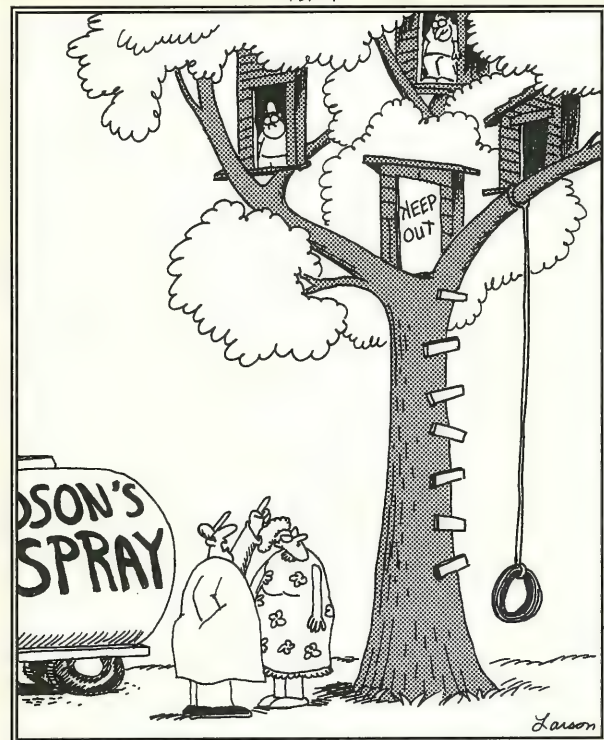


6/7/84

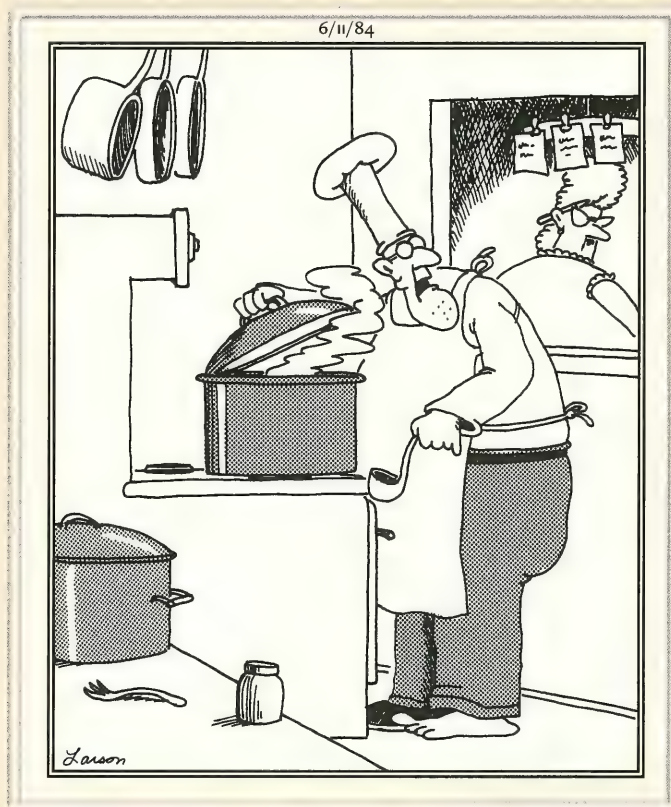


"Okay, before you go, let me read this one more time: 'Burn the houses, eliminate the townsfolk, destroy the crops, plunder their gold!'... You knuckleheads think you can handle all that?"

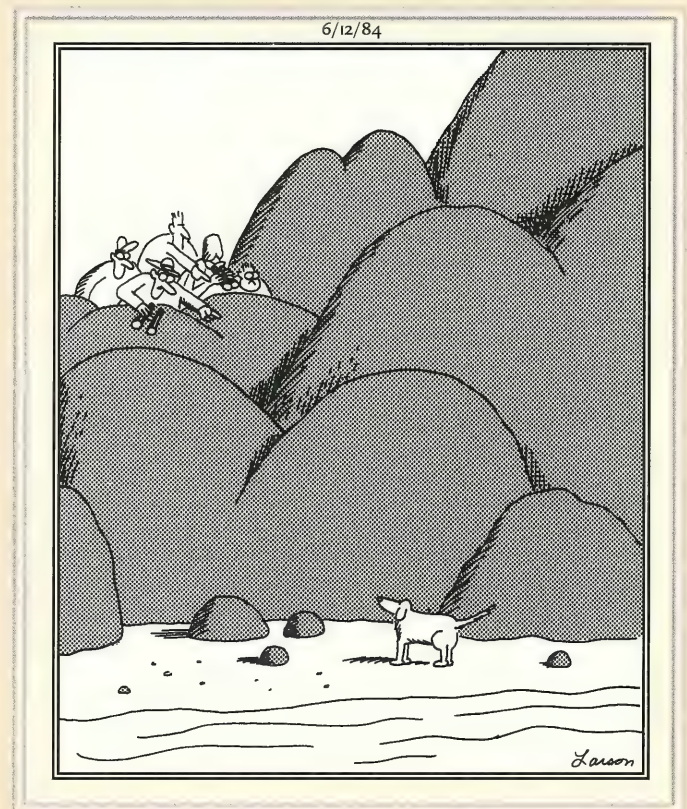
6/9/84



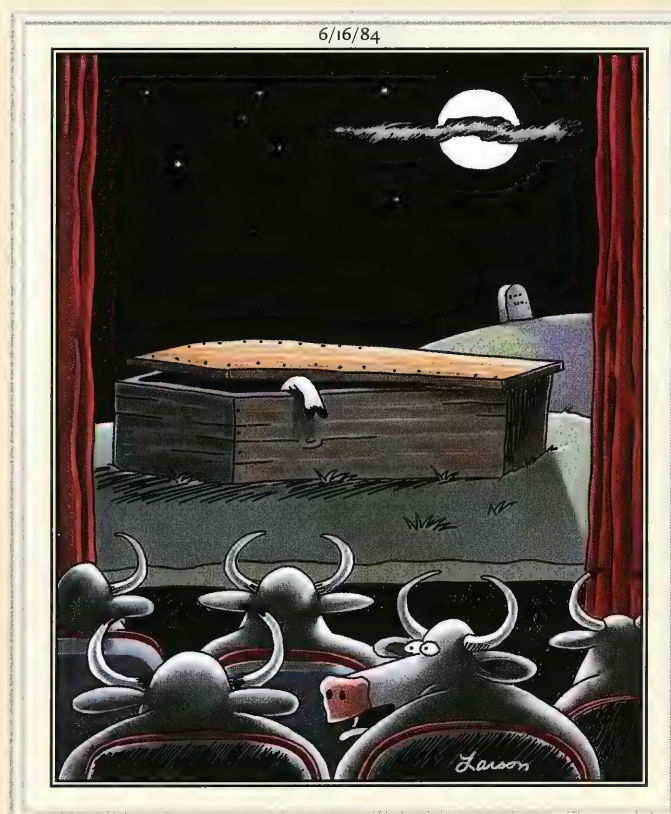
"Well, you've got quite an infestation here, ma'am. ... I can't promise anything, but I imagine I can knock out some of the bigger nests."



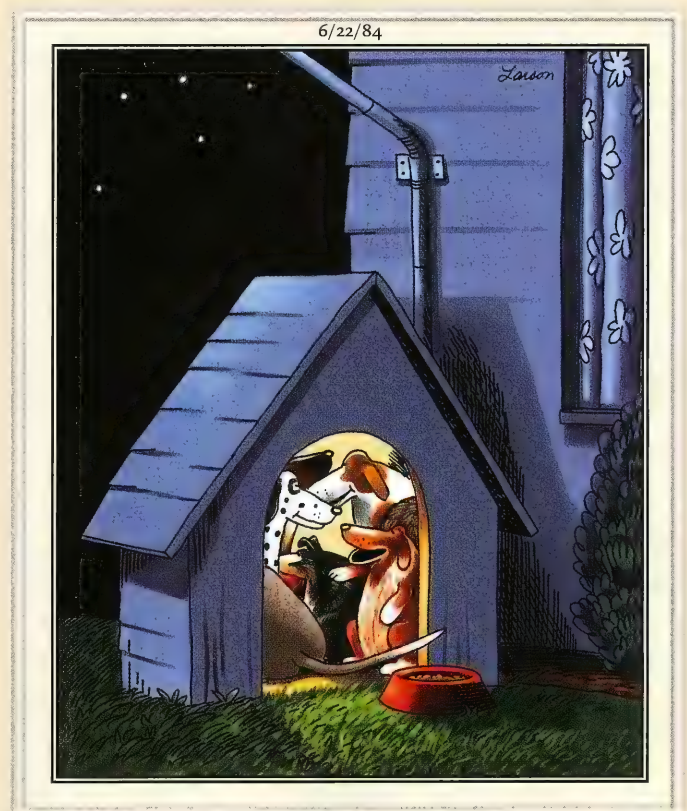
"Soup of the day is ready!"



Another sighting of the Loch Ness dog



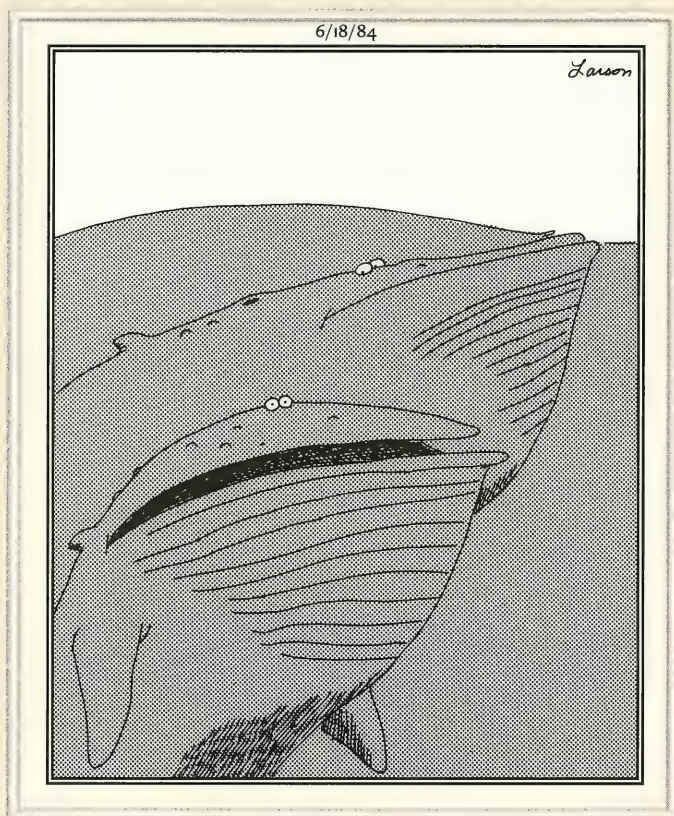
"Oo! ... Here he comes to feed on the milk of the living."



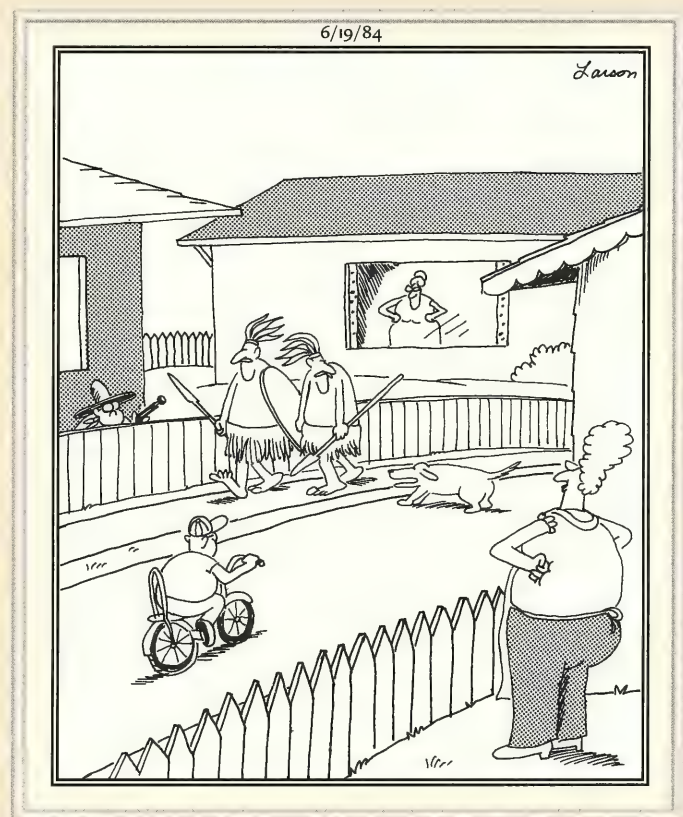
"Oh, hey! Fantastic party, Tricksy! Fantastic! ... Say, do you mind telling me which way to the yard?"



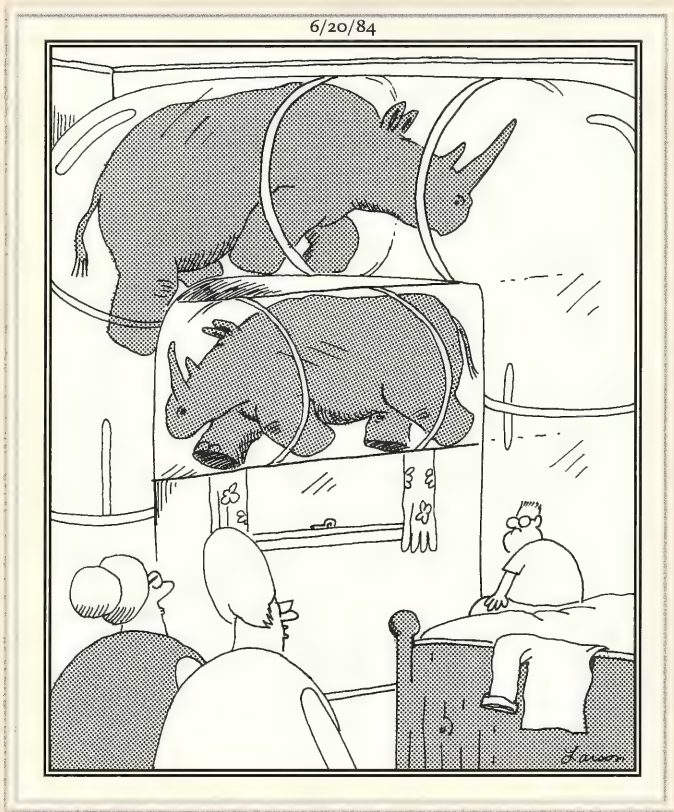
"FIRE!"



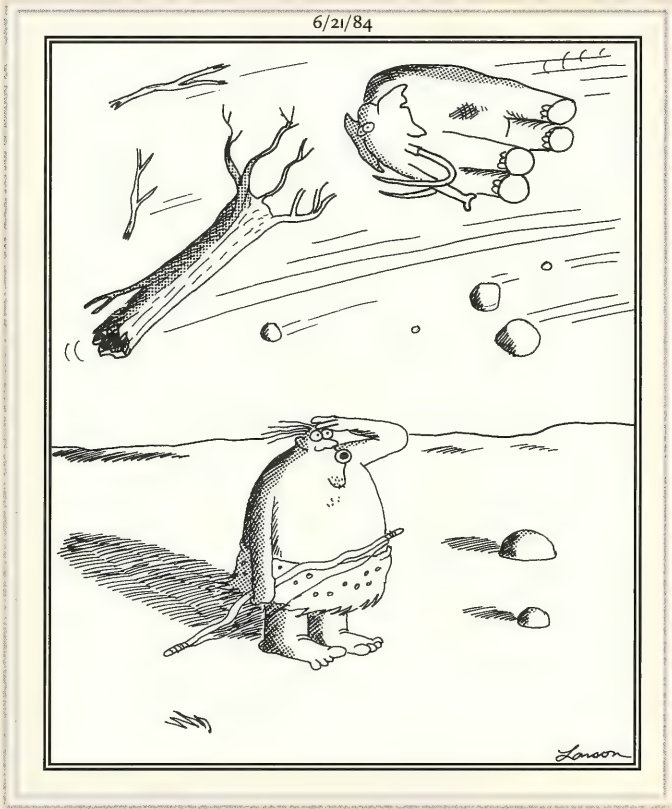
"Oo! Icky icky! ... Something just went down that surrrrrre wasn't plankton!"



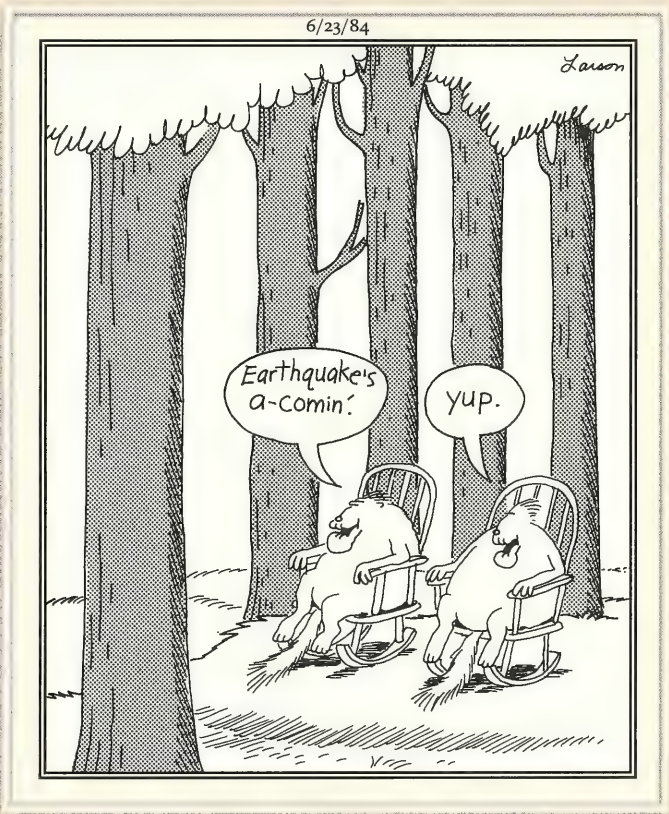
Lost in the suburbs, Tonga and Zootho wander for days—plagued by dogs, kids, and protective mothers.



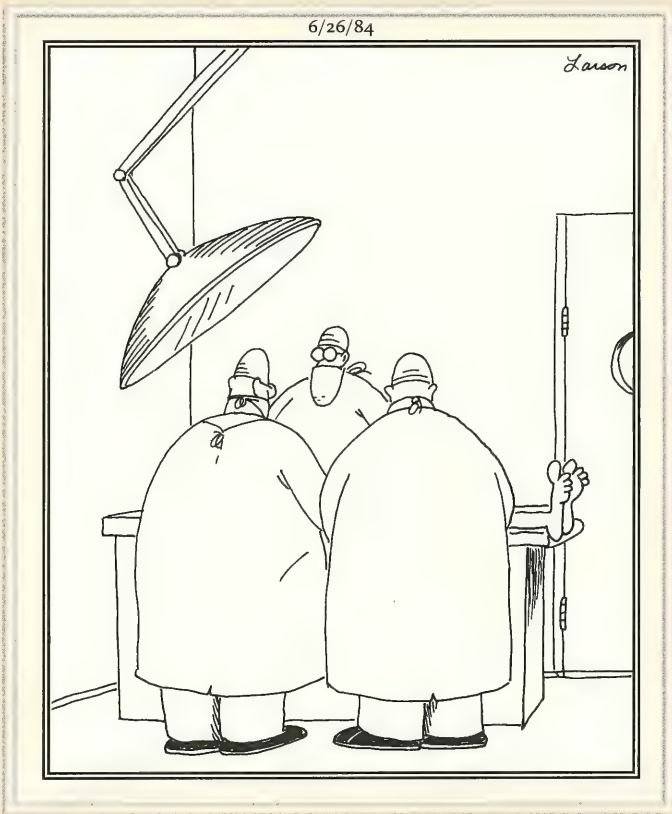
"Dennis, do you mind if Mrs. Carlisle comes in and sees your rhino tube-farm?"



The first cruise arrow is tested.

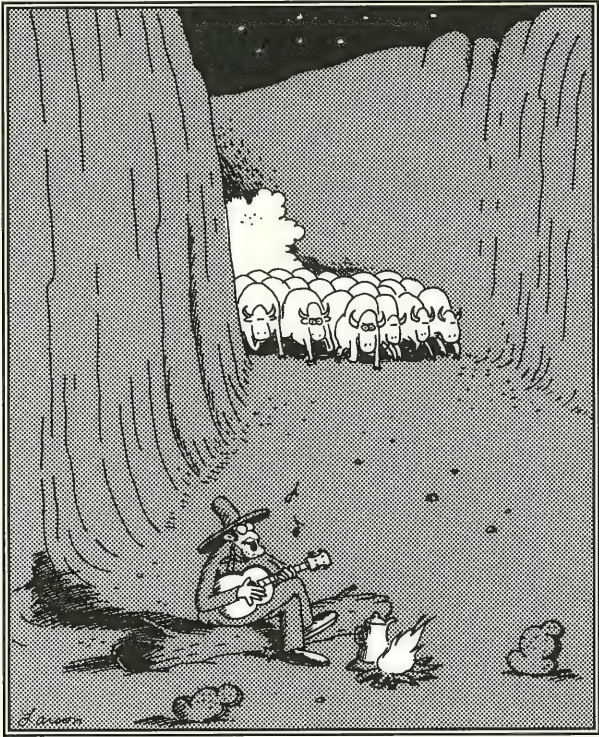


The mysterious intuition of some animals



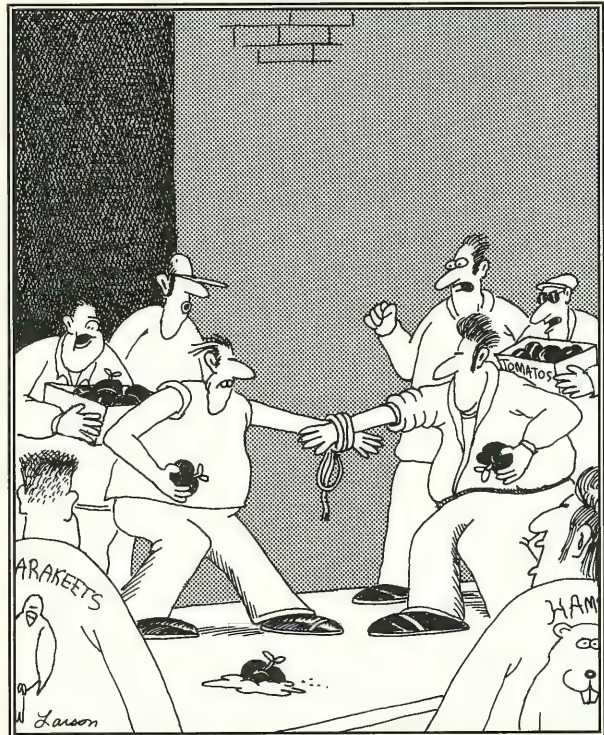
"Okay, Wellington. I'm comfortable with my grip if you are. ... Have you made a wish?"

6/27/84



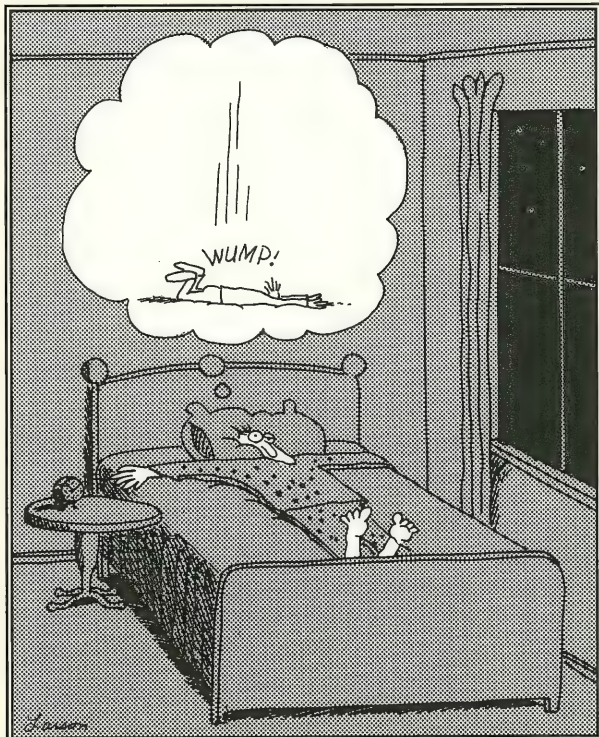
"Oh, give me a home, where the buffalo roam ..."

6/28/84



Goaded on by their respective gangs, the leaders of the Hamster Demons and the Parakeet Devils square off.

6/29/84



Dreaming he's falling, Jerry forgets the well-known "always-wake-up-before-you-land" rule.

6/30/84



Testing whether laughter is the best medicine.



"Well no wonder! ... It's plugged in! ... And I thought I was going nuts!"



"Uh-oh, Ruby. ... The apartment downstairs is awfully quiet."



Jungle apparel

7/6/84



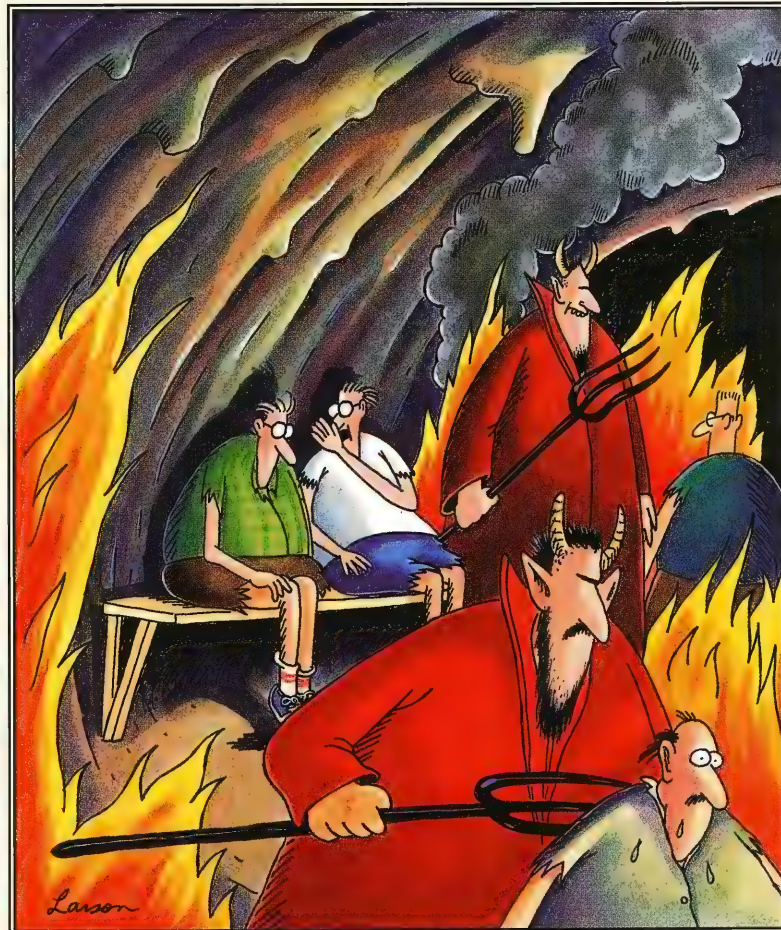
At night, the forest custodians would arrive—sometimes stopping work to laugh and gossip about the habits of certain daytime animals.

7/7/84

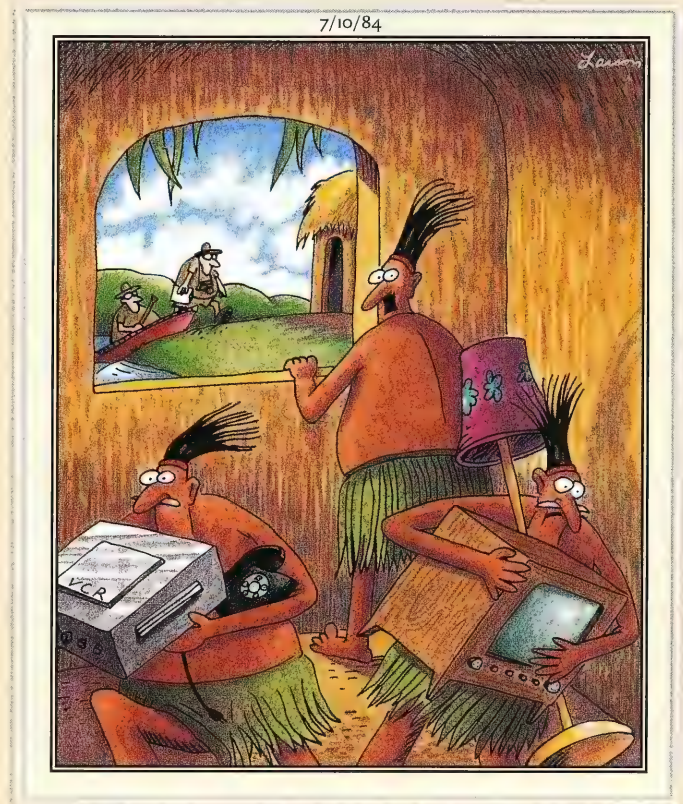


“Well, thank goodness we all made it to the surface. ... You and your damn smoking in bed!”

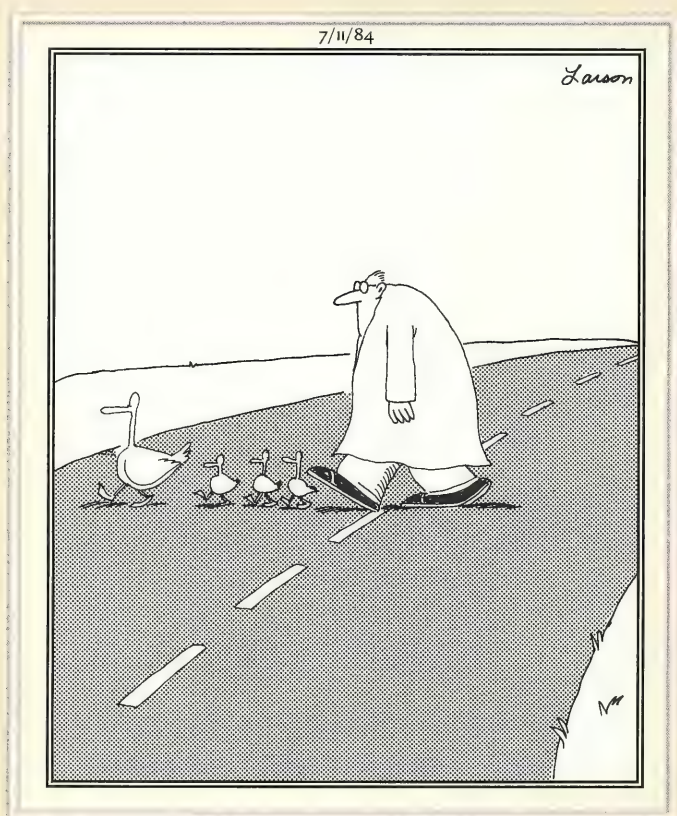
7/4/84



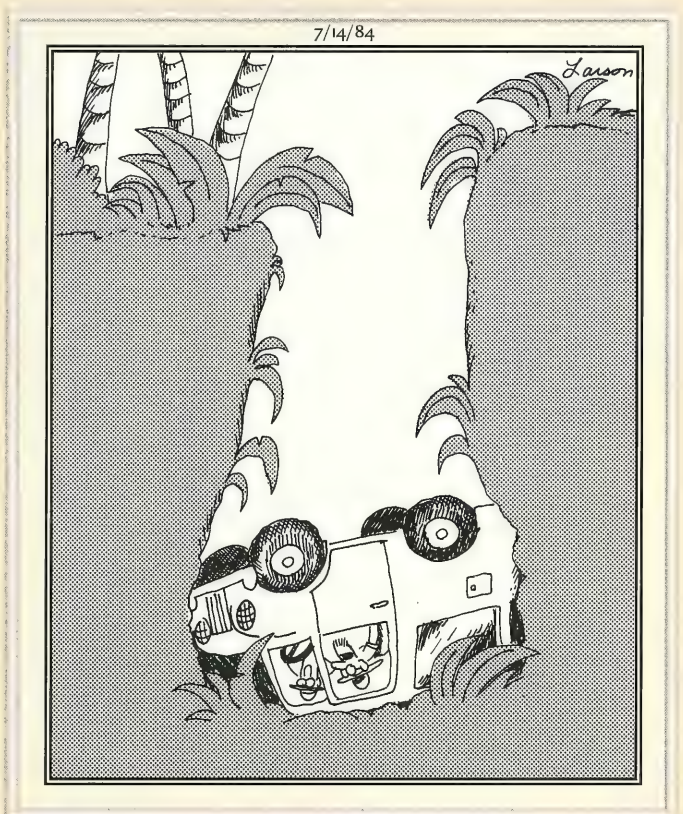
“I hate this place.”



"Anthropologists! Anthropologists!"



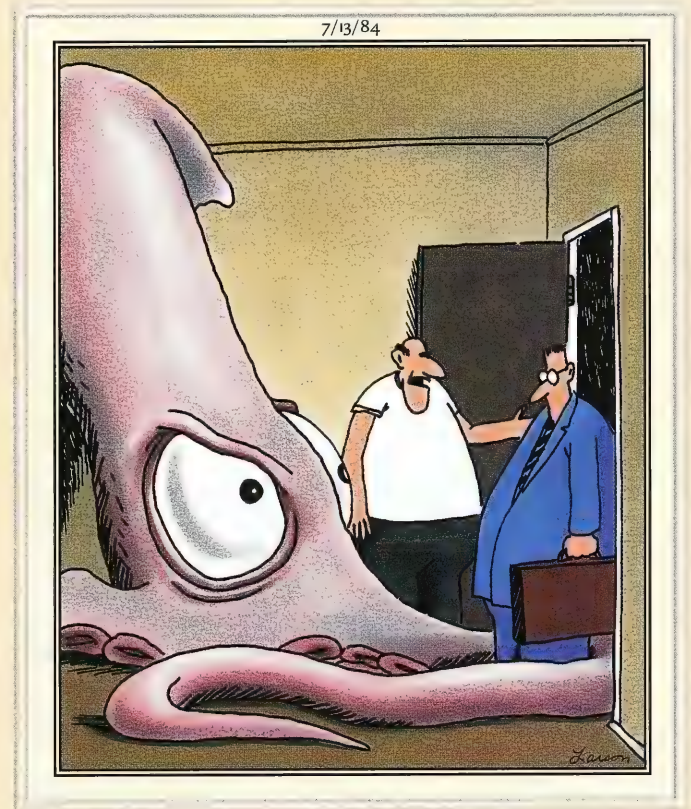
When imprinting studies go awry



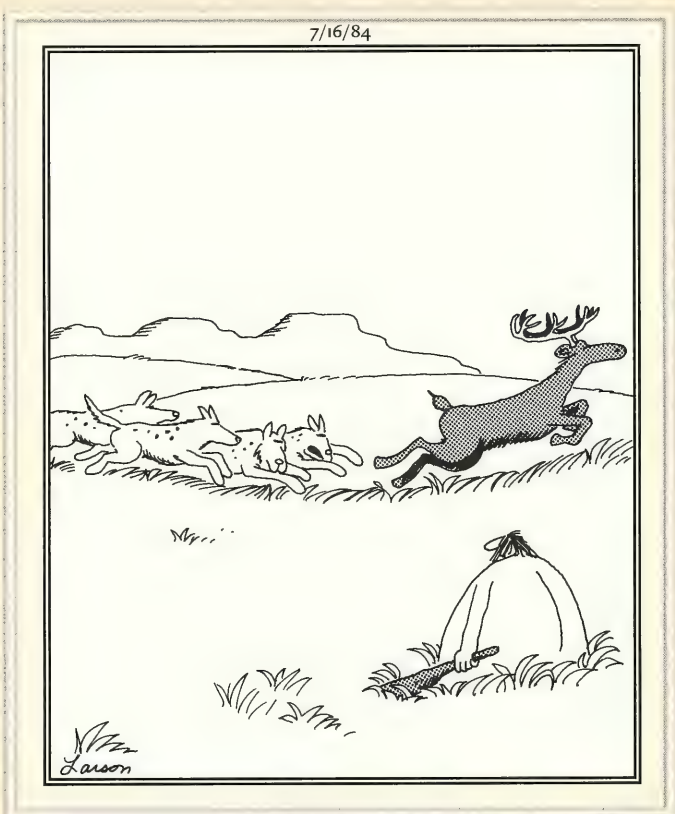
"Of all the luck! ... Are you sure it's in four-wheel drive, Saunders?"



"Hey! ... Six eyes!"



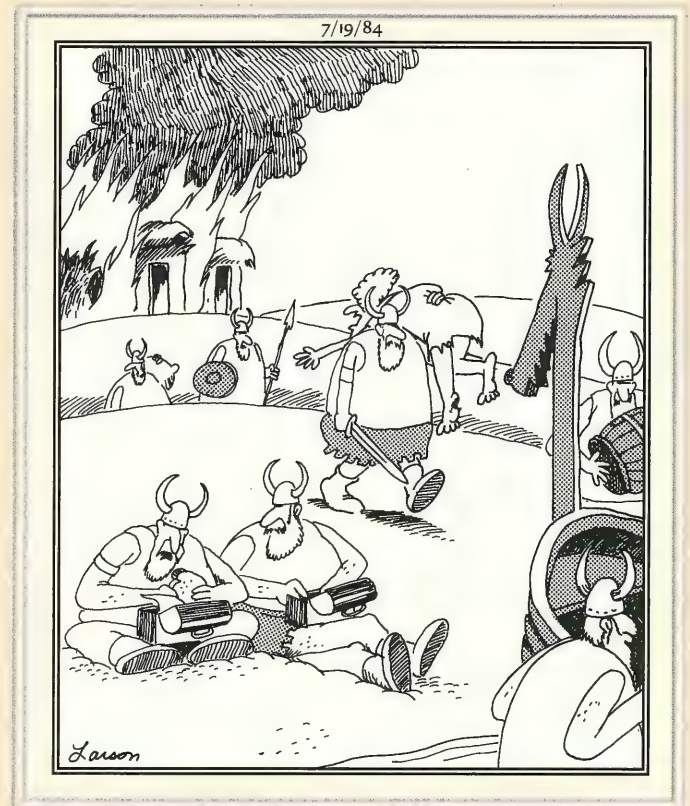
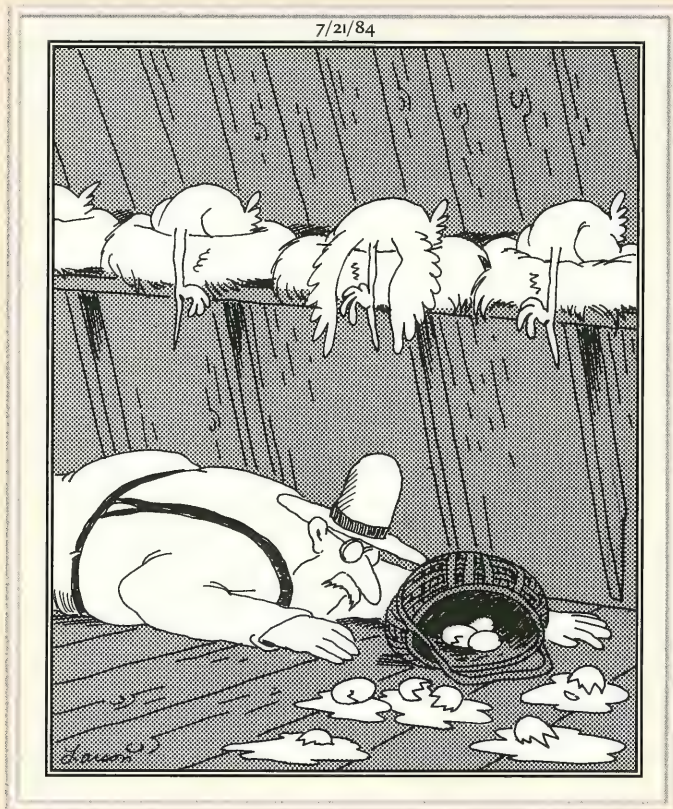
"Oh, no, he's quite harmless. ... Just don't show any fear. Squids can sense fear."



"What the? ... How'd that thing get out on the field?"



Natural selection at work



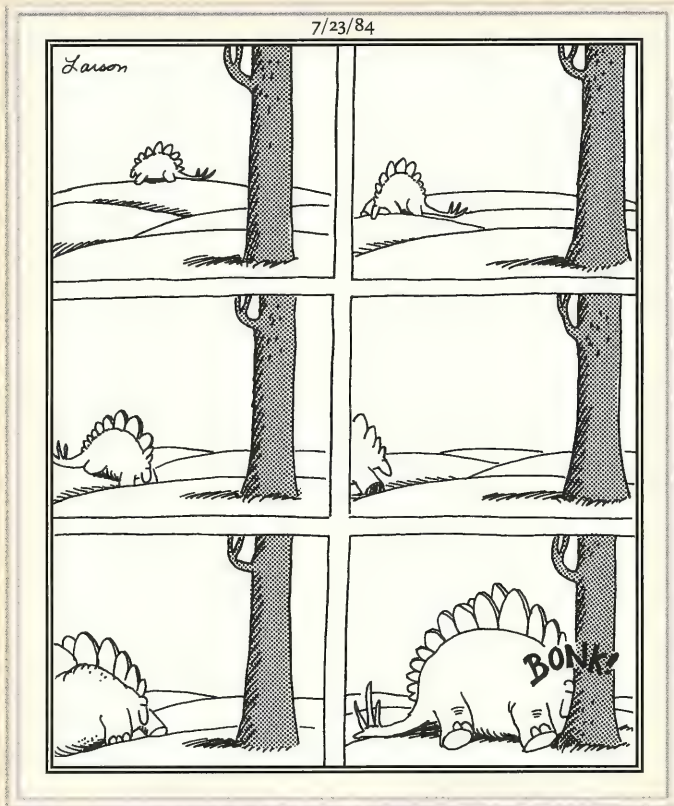
"Well, she's done it to me again ... Tuna fish!"



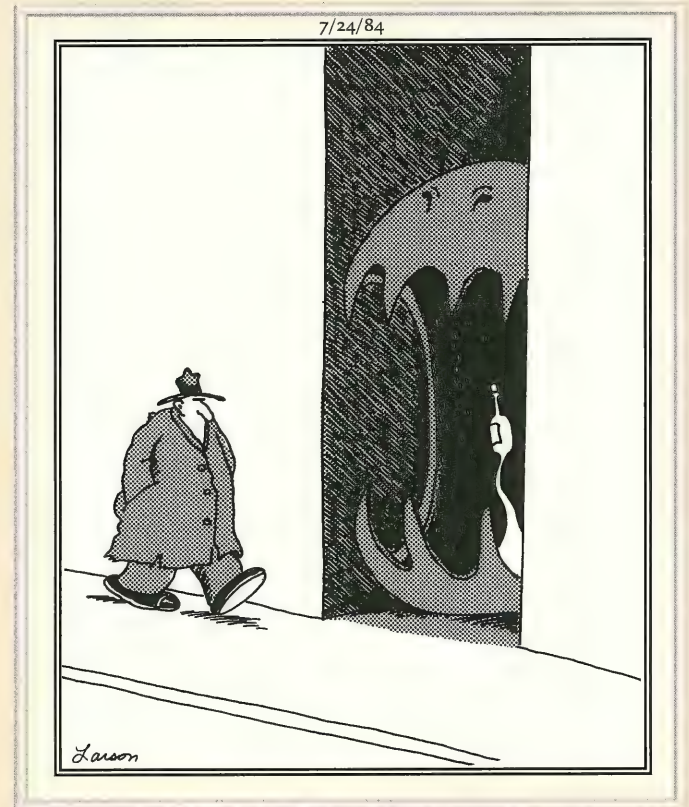
"Play him, Sidney! Play him! ... Oooooooooooooo! ... It's gonna be fresh burgers tonight!"



"That's the third one you've lost this month, Edgar. ... You've got to stop believing these guys who say they're just stepping out to use the restroom."



Dinosaur cranial capacity



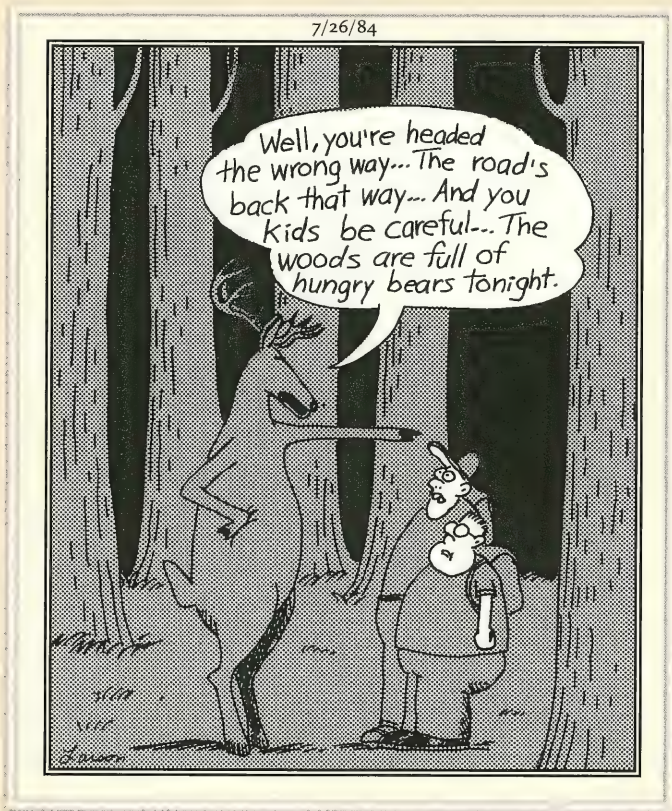
Animal lures



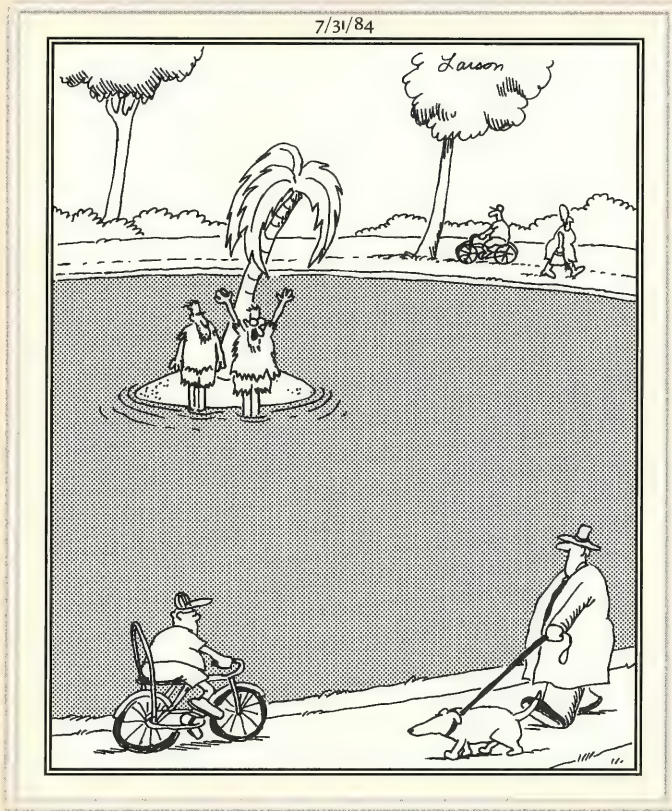
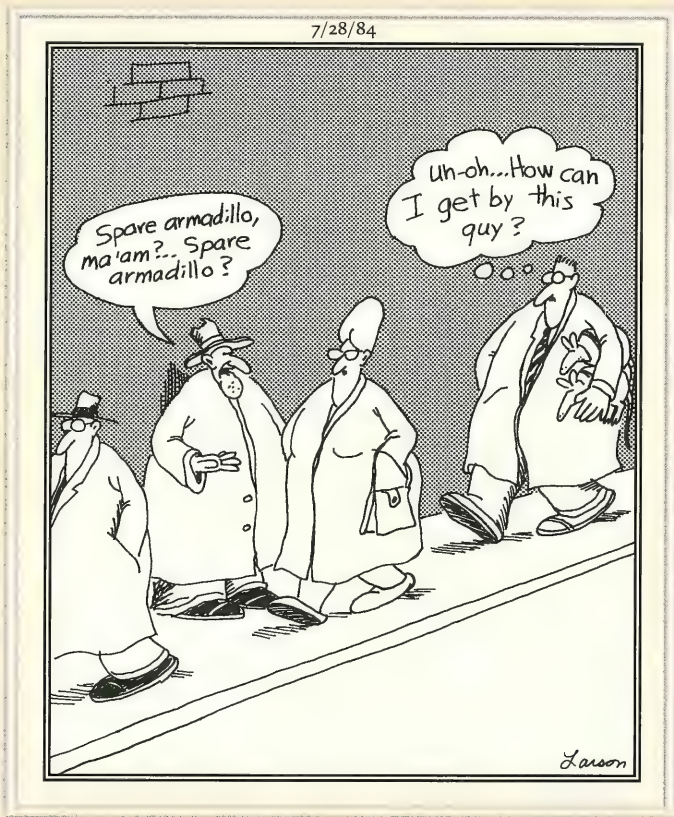
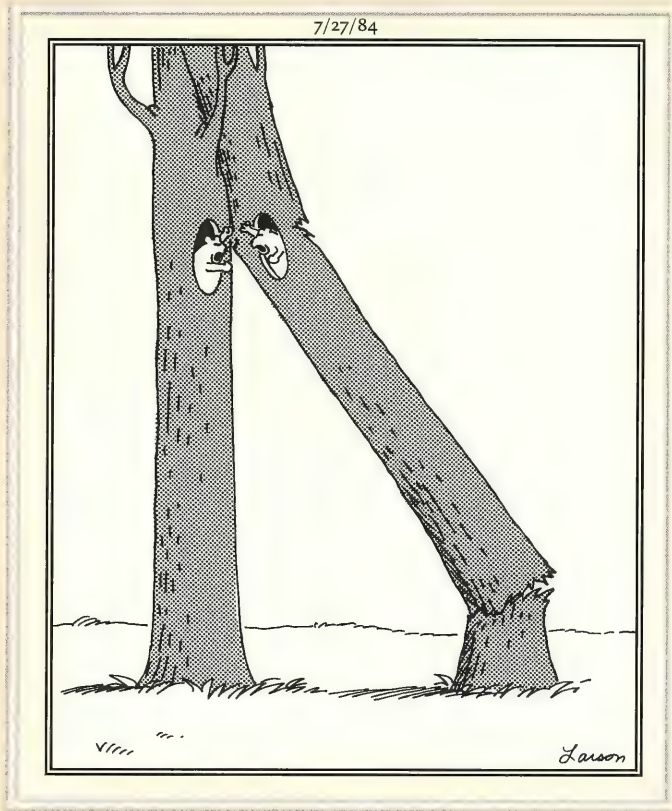
"You know, it's really dumb to keep this right next to the cereal. ... In fact, I don't know why we even keep this stuff around in the first place."



"Hey, you stupid bovines! You'll never get that contraption off the ground! ... Think it'll run on hay? ... Say, maybe you'll make it to the moooooooooon! ..."



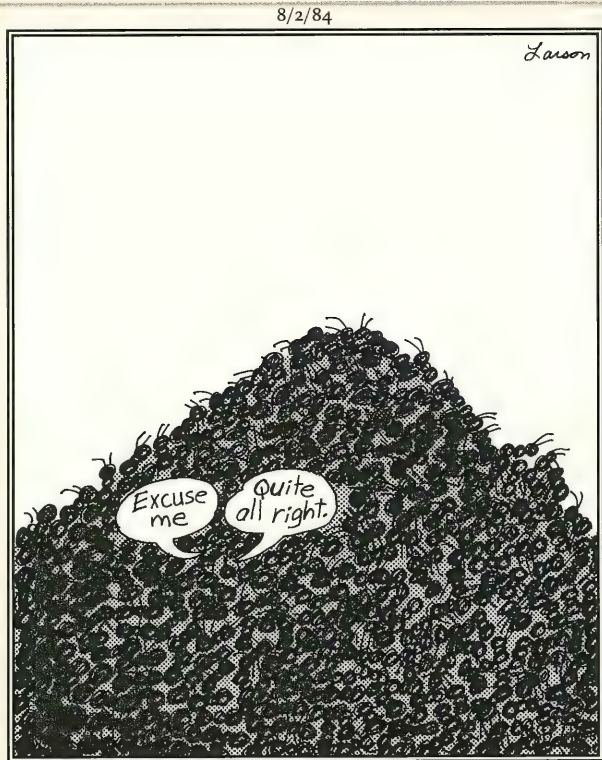
Animal Samaritans



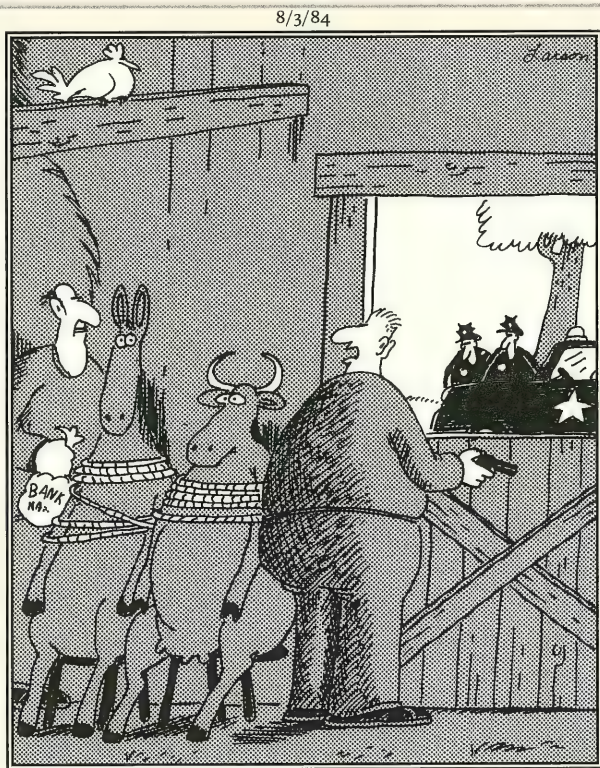
"Yes! Yes! This is it, Sidney! The guy with the dog! ... I think he sees us!"



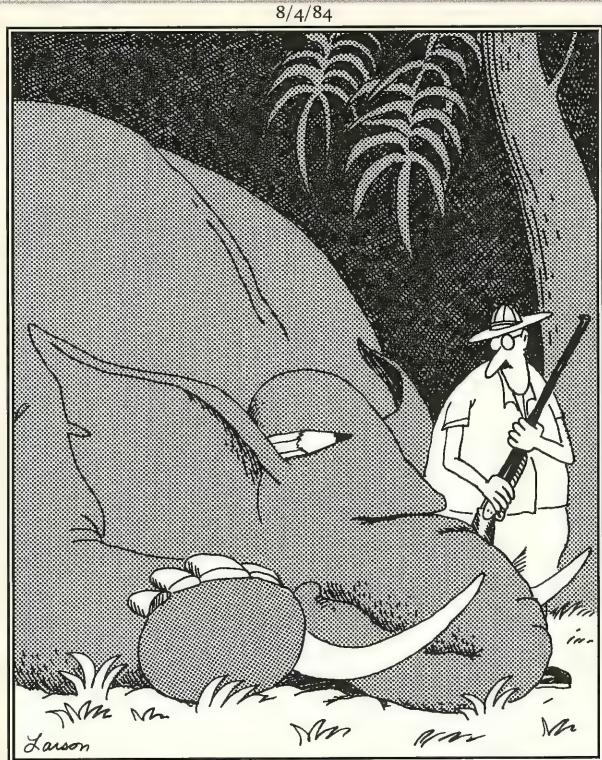
"Couldn't resist, could you, Farnsworth! ...
Just *had* to reach up and honk the
chief's nose!"

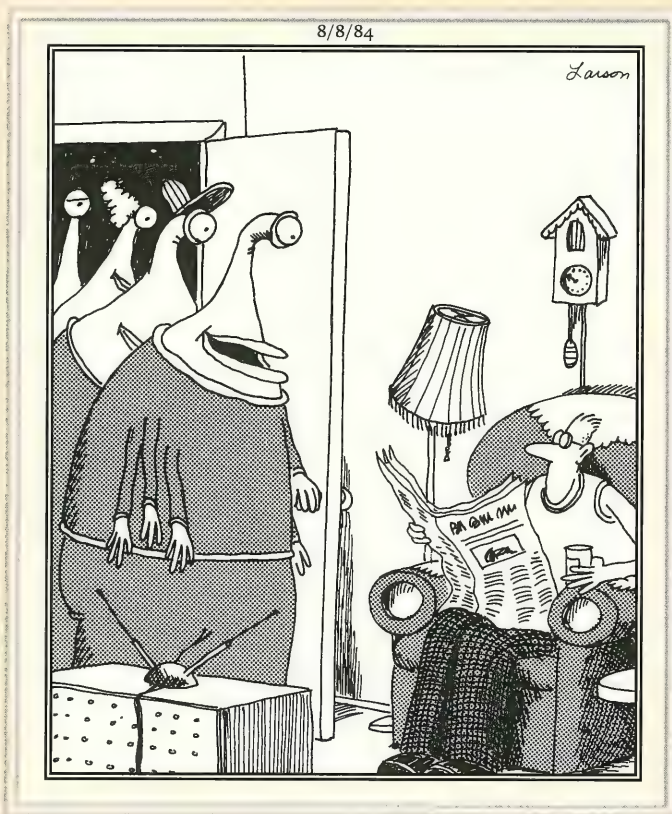


Social manners

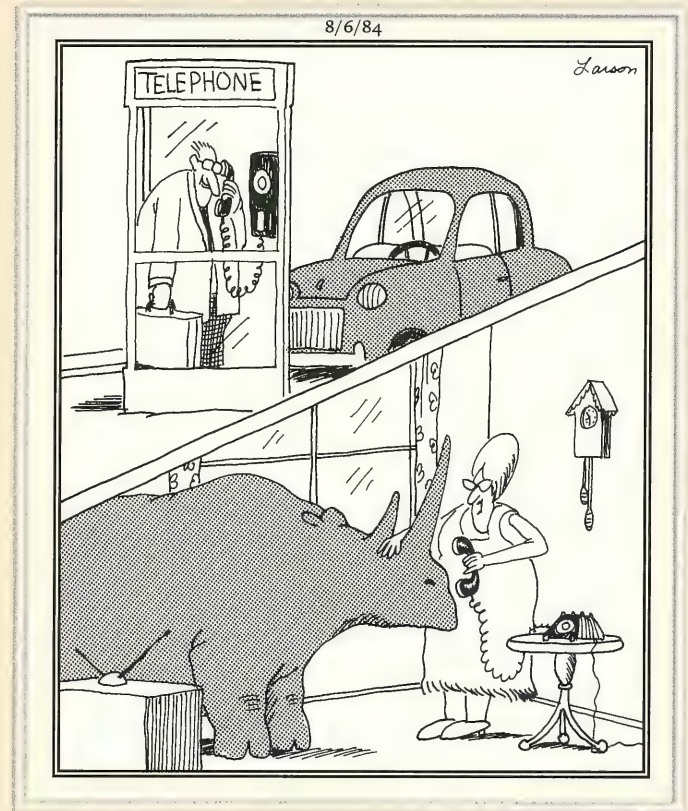


"They say they're not making any deals until
they're sure the animals are okay."





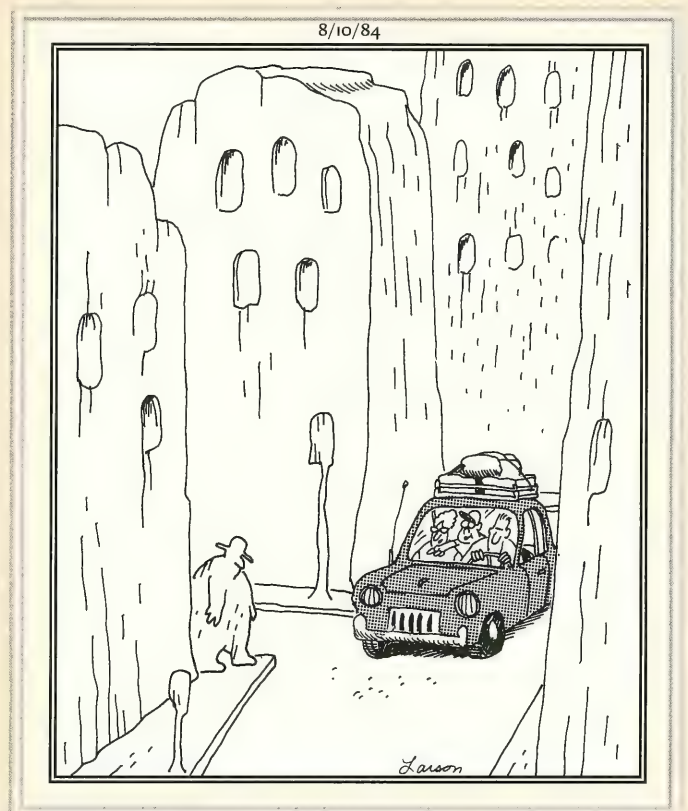
"Now, this is a typical dwelling of a species that ... Hey! All right! I think we even caught the little fellow at home!"



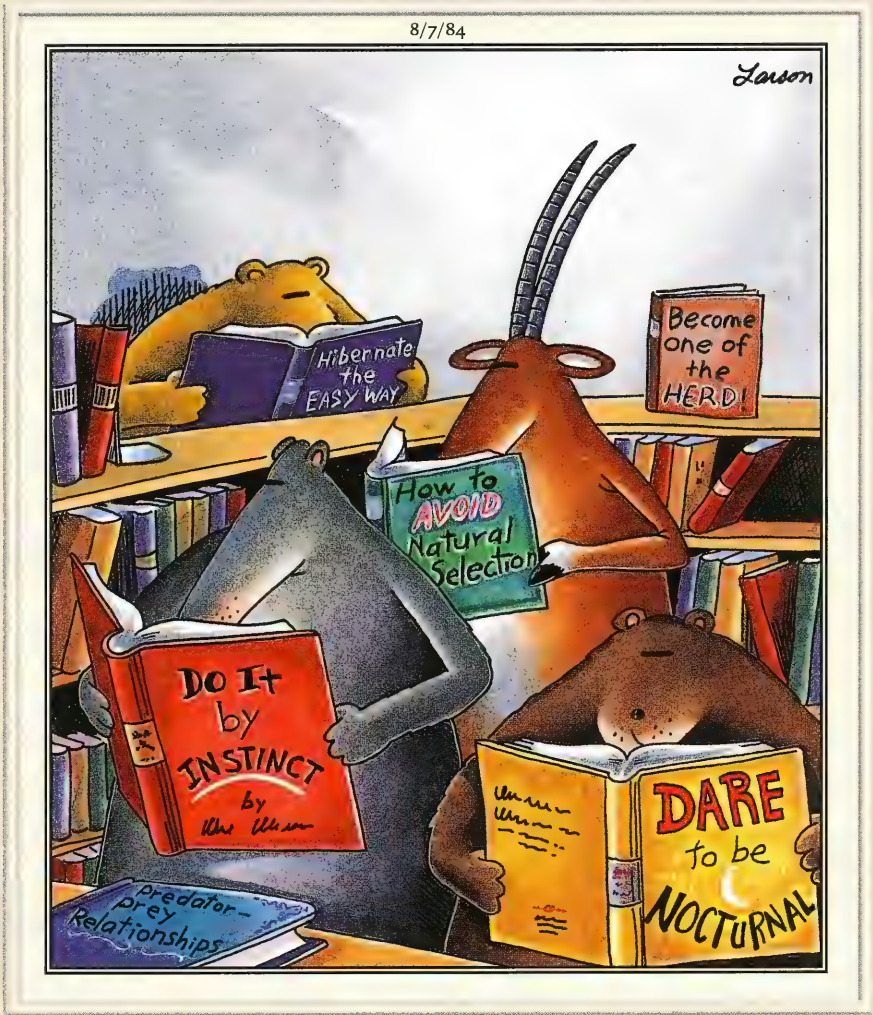
"Come on, baby ... one grunt for Daddy ... one grunt for Daddy."



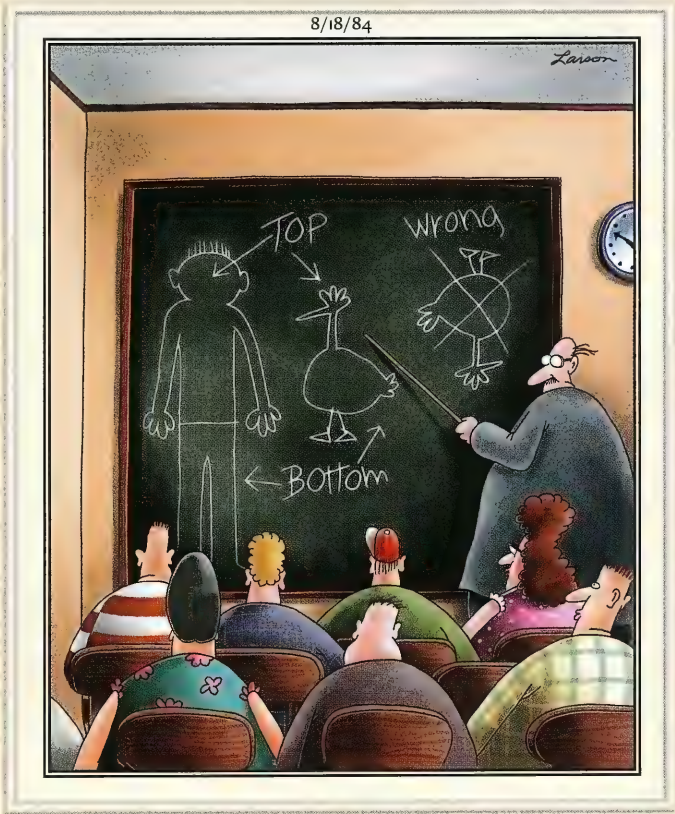
And then, the dawn was still once more—another miracle of Nature had emerged.



Visiting the Petrified City



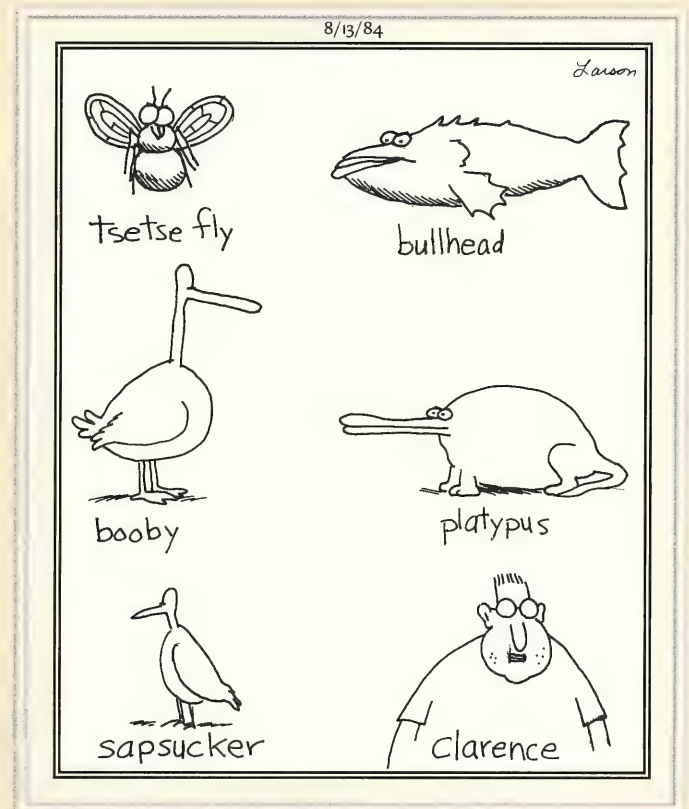
In the animal self-help section



People who don't know which end is up



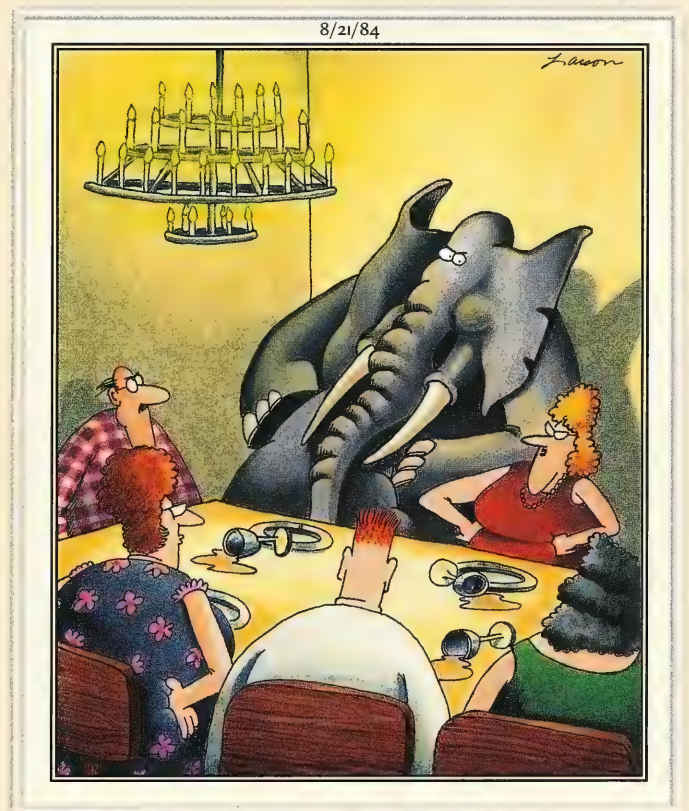
Early musical chairs



Unfair animal names



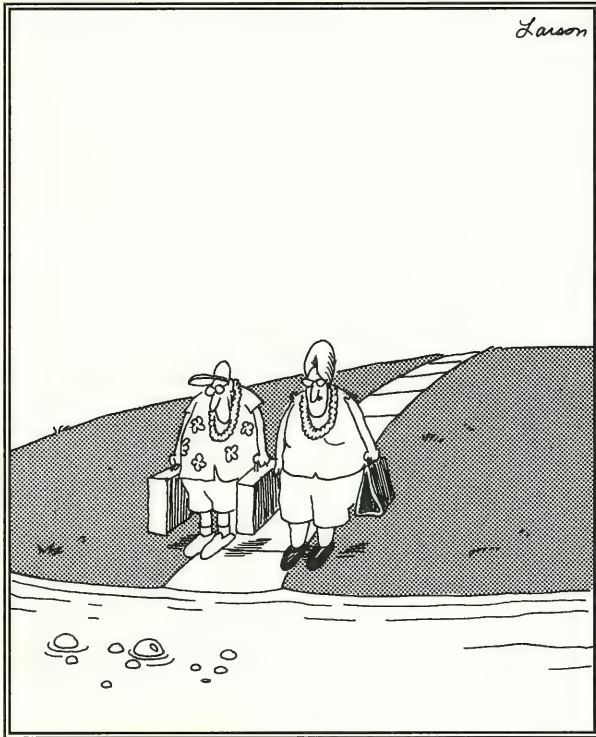
Harvesting the work of ketchup bees



"Well, I beg your pardon ... but where I come from, it's considered a compliment to let fly with a good trumpeting after dinner."

8/15/84

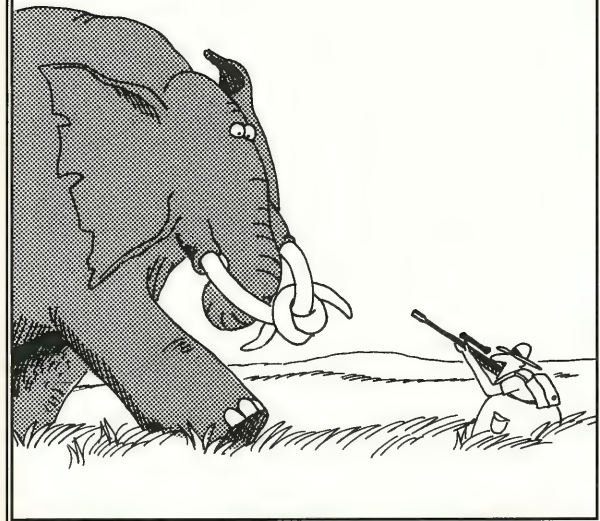
Larson



Returning from vacation, Roy and Barbara find their house, their neighborhood, their friends—in fact, all of Atlantis is just plain gone.

8/17/84

Larson



Suddenly, his worst fears realized, the old fellow's tusks jammed.

8/24/84

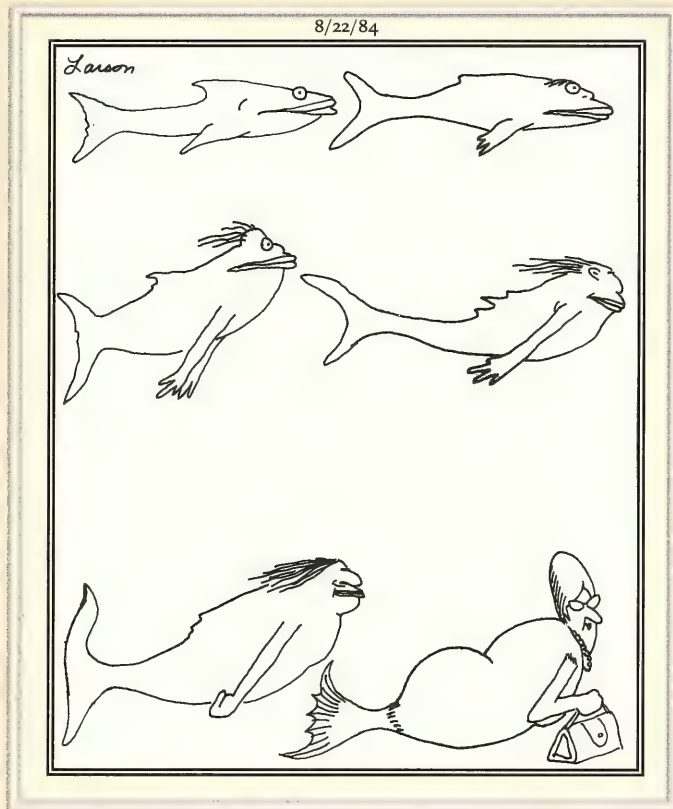
Larson



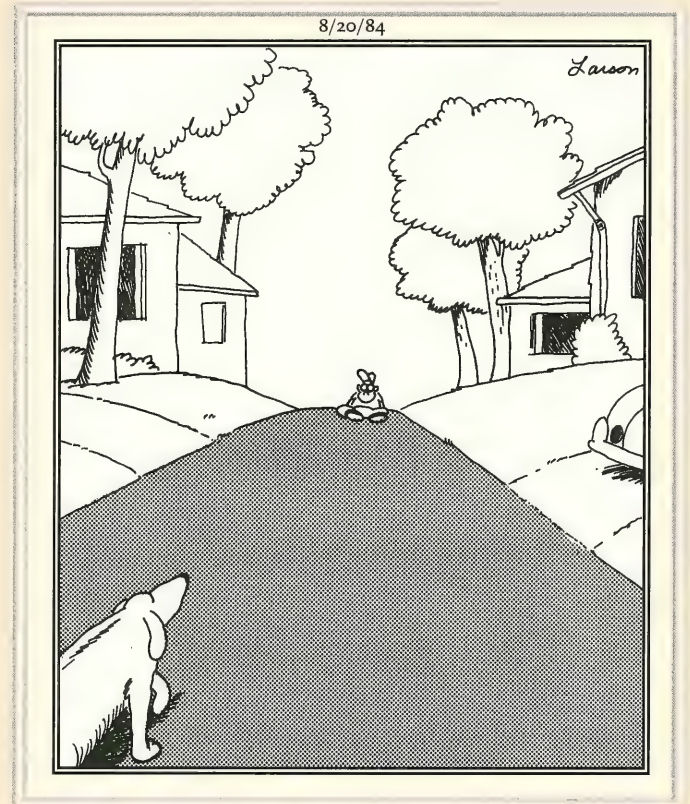
"No gophers, Stuart. ... But there's an old garden rake of yours down here."

8/25/84

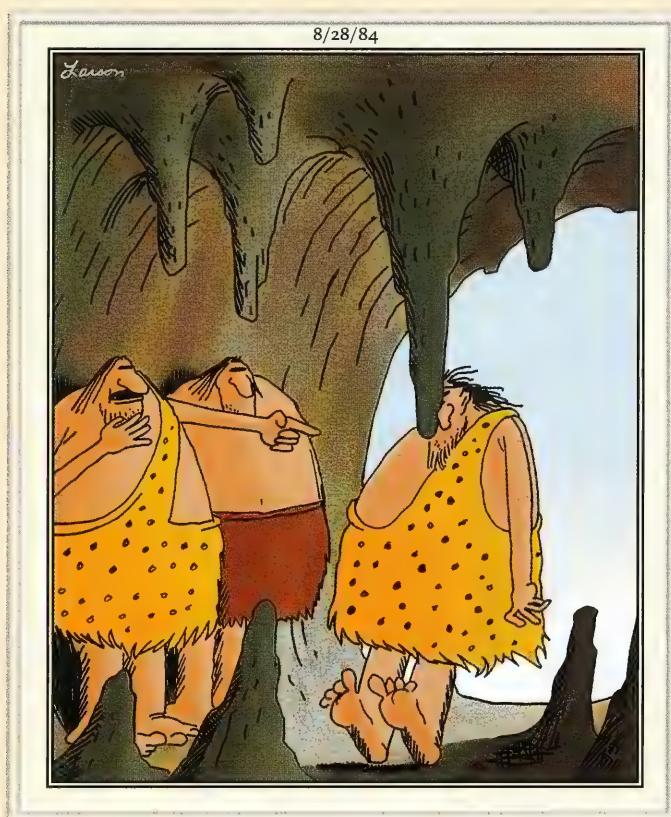




Mermaid evolution



After a full day of carousing and raising Cain in the neighborhood, Old Jake could count on a familiar sight to greet him.

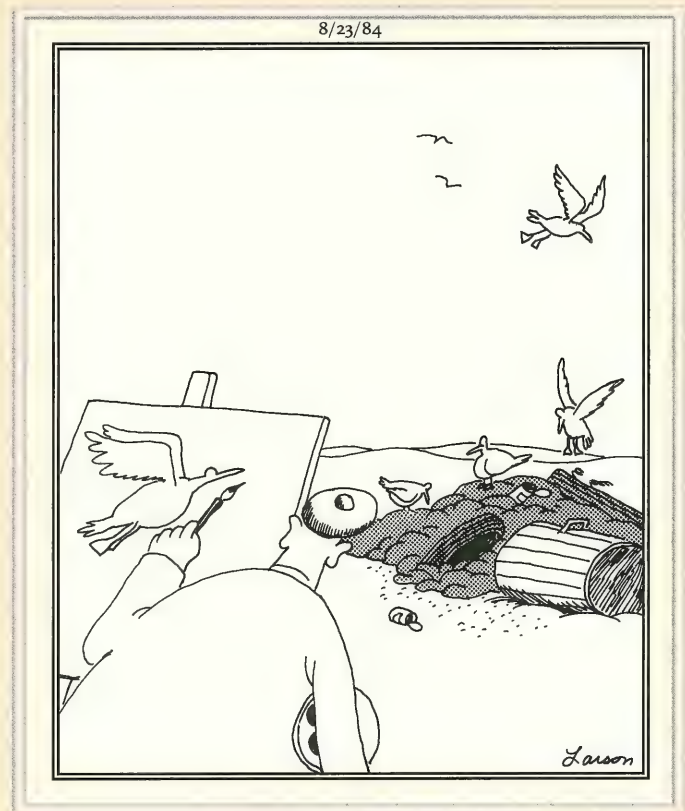


"Oo! Grog run into a ... a ... dang! Now which kind stick up and which kind hang down?"

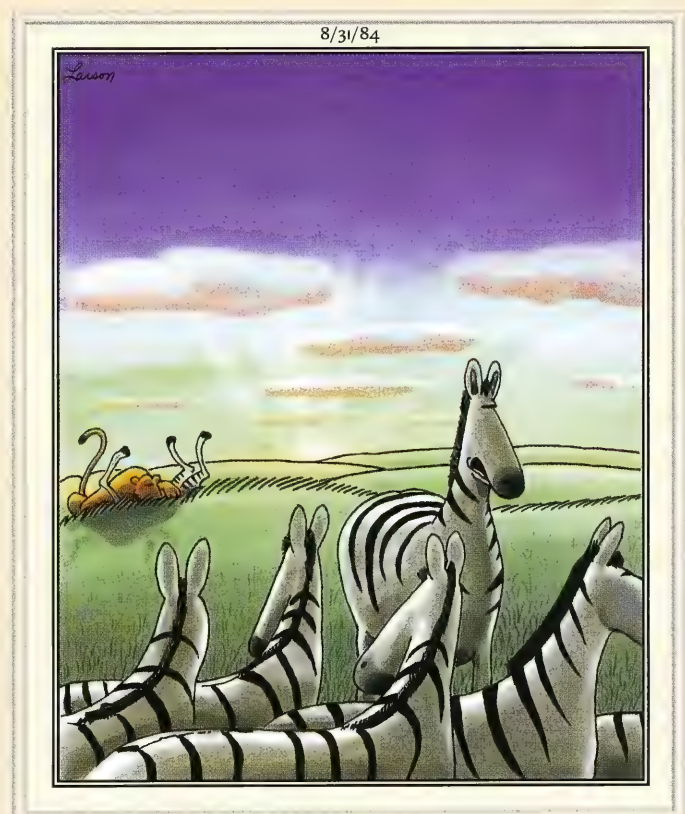




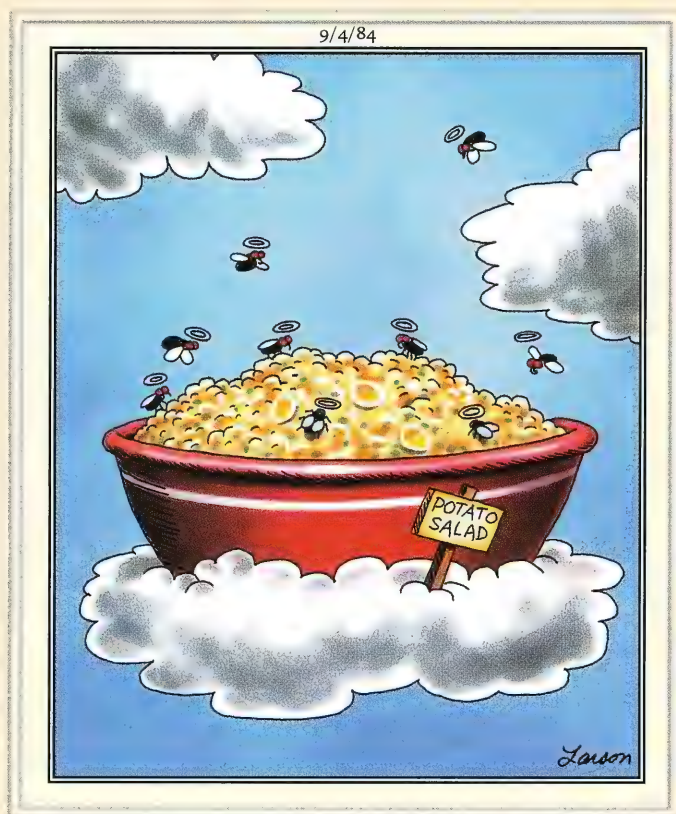
"My word, Frank—sounds like you're coming down with one heck of a cold."



Someone for everyone



"Let's move it, folks. ... Nothing to see here. ...
It's all over. ... Move it along, folks. ...
Let's go, let's go ..."



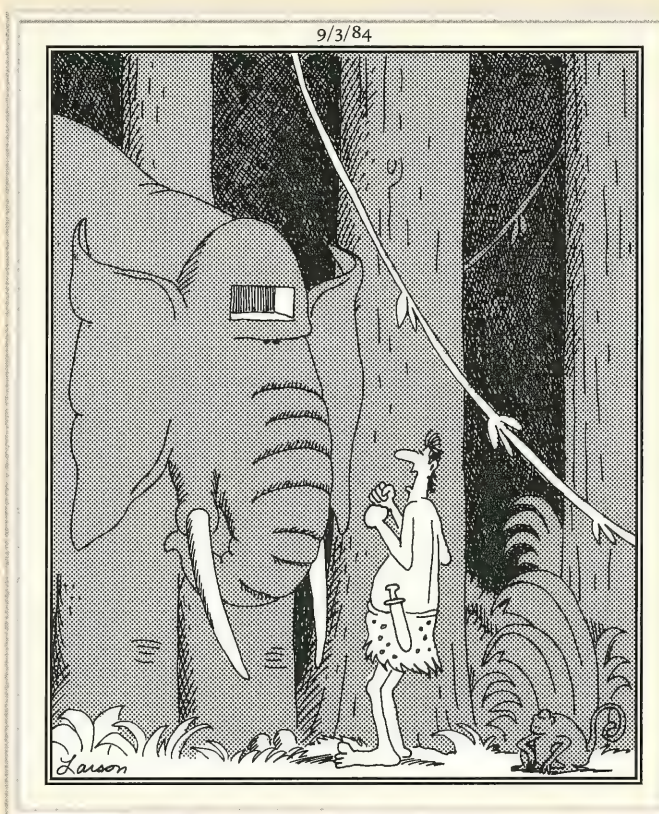
Fly heaven



Her tentacles swaying seductively in the breeze, the Venus Kidtrap was again poised and ready.



"Egad! It's those weird possums from across town! ... Everyone fake like you're dead."



"Dang! The radio's been ripped off again."

9/6/84



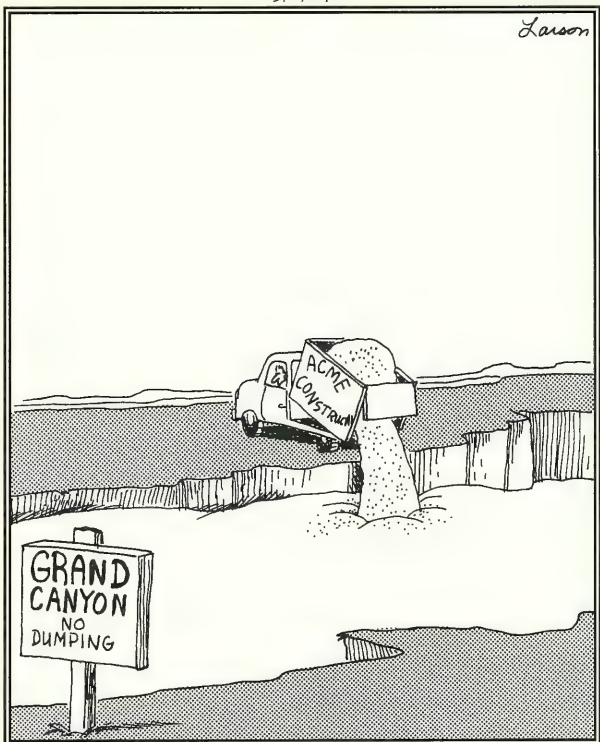
Suddenly, Bobby felt very alone in the world.

9/12/84



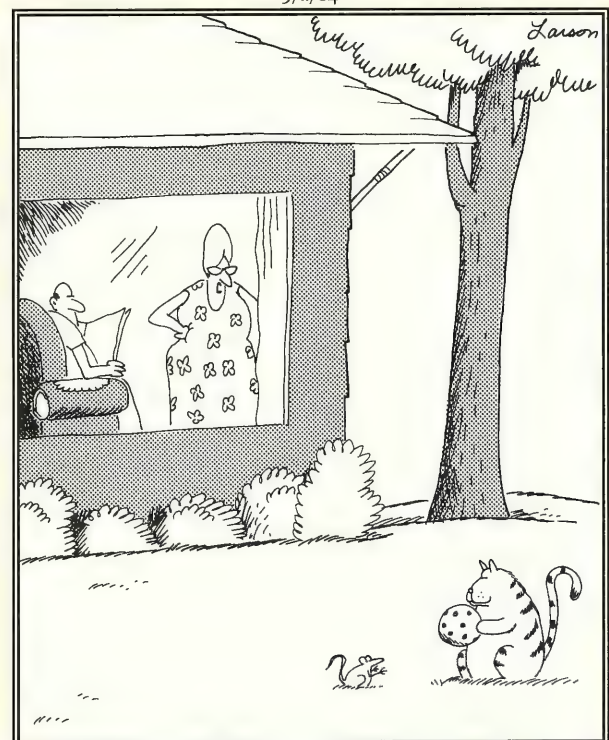
The young dog's nightmare: premature mange

9/8/84



Unfortunately, Larry had always approached from the side that wasn't posted, and a natural phenomenon was destroyed before anyone could react.

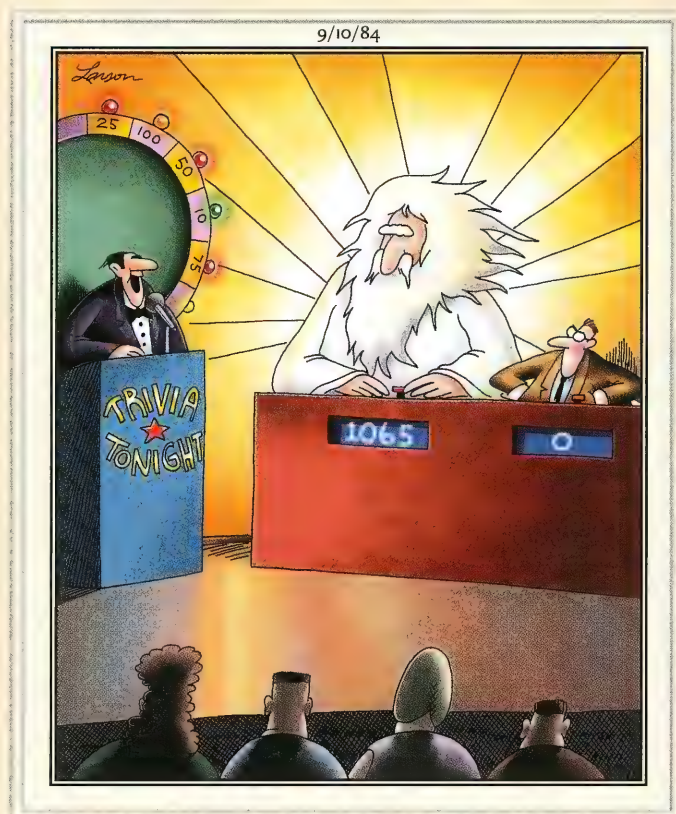
9/11/84



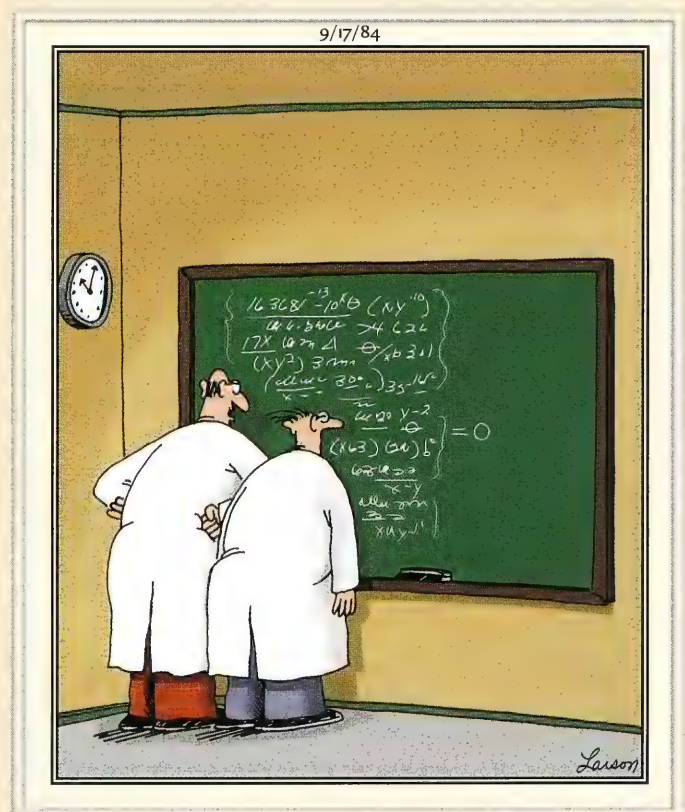
"Well, that cat's doing it again—keeping that poor thing alive just to play with it awhile."



"Oh, quit worrying about it, Andrew. They're just love handles."



"Yes! That's right! The answer is 'Wisconsin'! Another 50 points for God, and ... uh-oh, looks like Norman, our current champion, hasn't even scored yet."



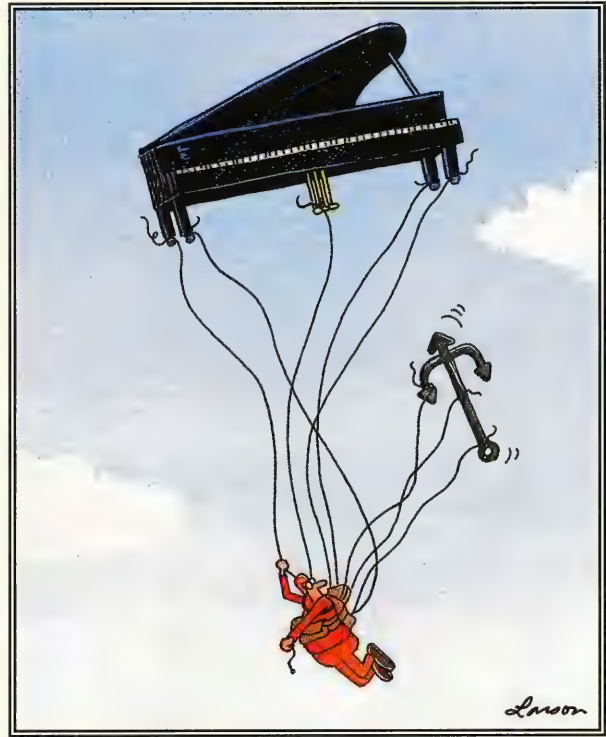
"No doubt about it, Ellington—we've mathematically expressed the purpose of the universe. God, how I love the thrill of scientific discovery!"

9/19/84



"Watch ... Thag says he make gravel angel."

9/25/84

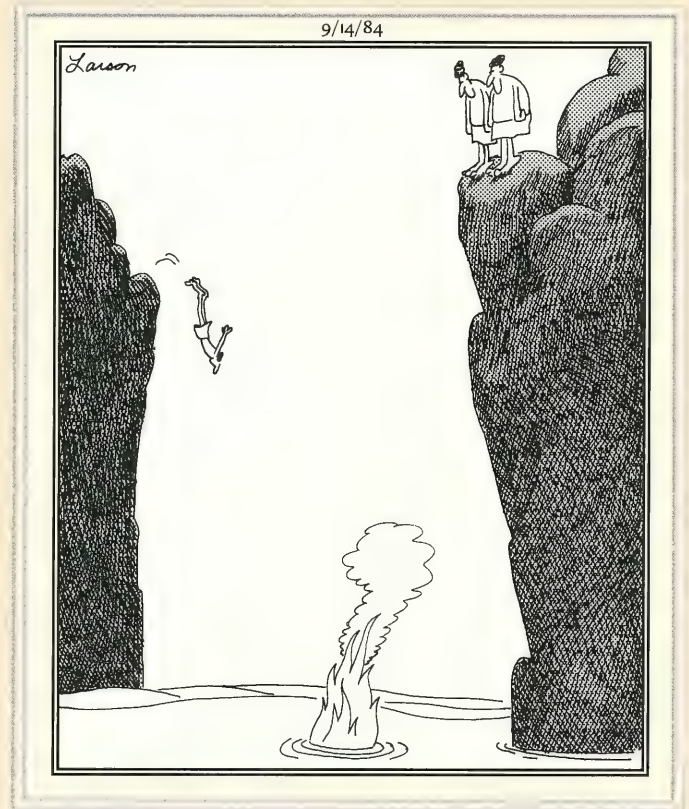
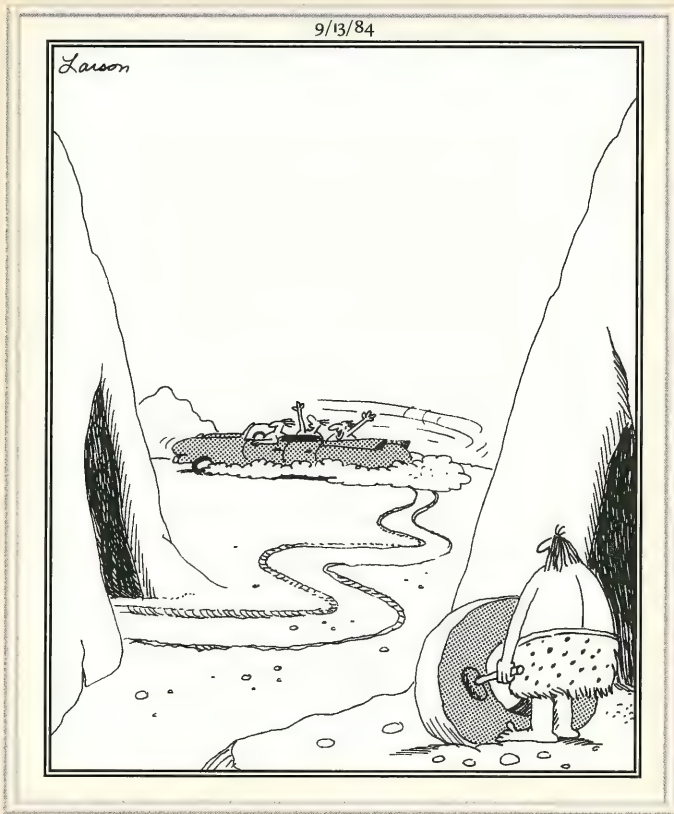


Murray didn't feel the first pangs of real panic until he pulled the emergency cord.

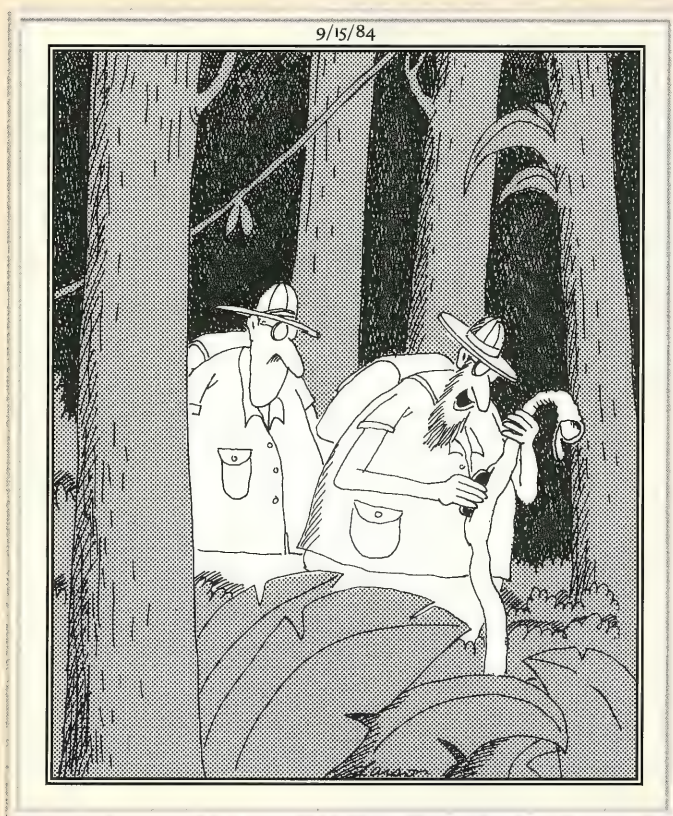
9/18/84



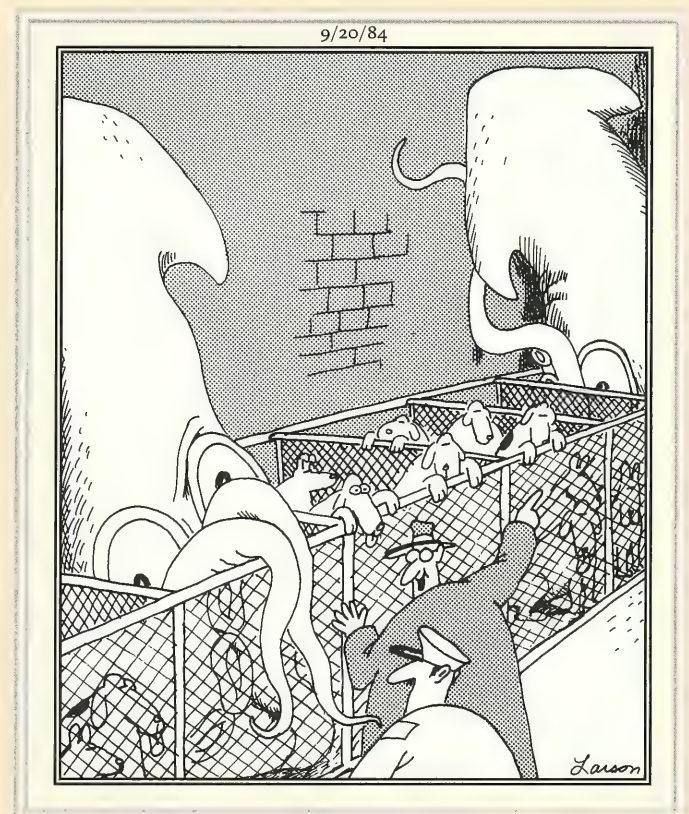
"Okay, one more time and it's off to bed for the both of you. ...'Hey, Bob. Think there are any bears in this old cave?' ...'I dunno, Jim. Let's take a look.'"



When cliff divers belly flop

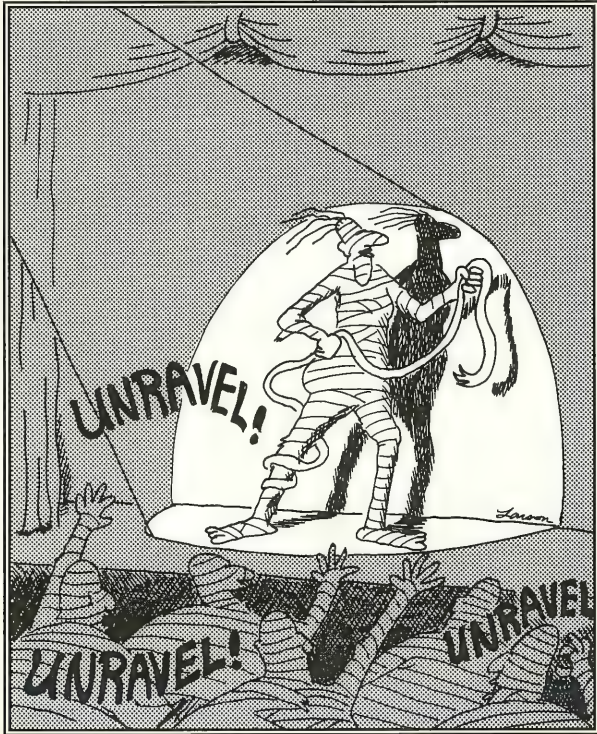


"Ah! The shed skin of some large, reptilian denizen. ... And a bonus, Ellsworth! Here's his wallet."



"Oh! Wait! Wait! My mistake! ... That's him down there!"

9/22/84



Saturday night at the crypt

9/21/84



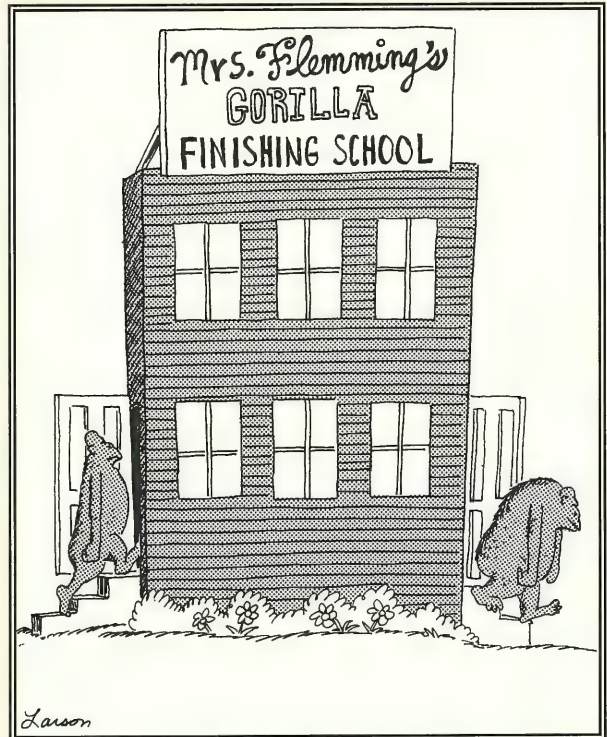
One remark led to another, and the bar suddenly polarized into two angry, confrontational factions: those espousing the virtues of the double-humped camel on the one side, single humpers on the other.

9/28/84



"Thag, take napkin. ... Got some mammoth on face."

9/29/84





"It's okay! It's okay! The tunnel was closing in on me there for a while, but I'm all right now."



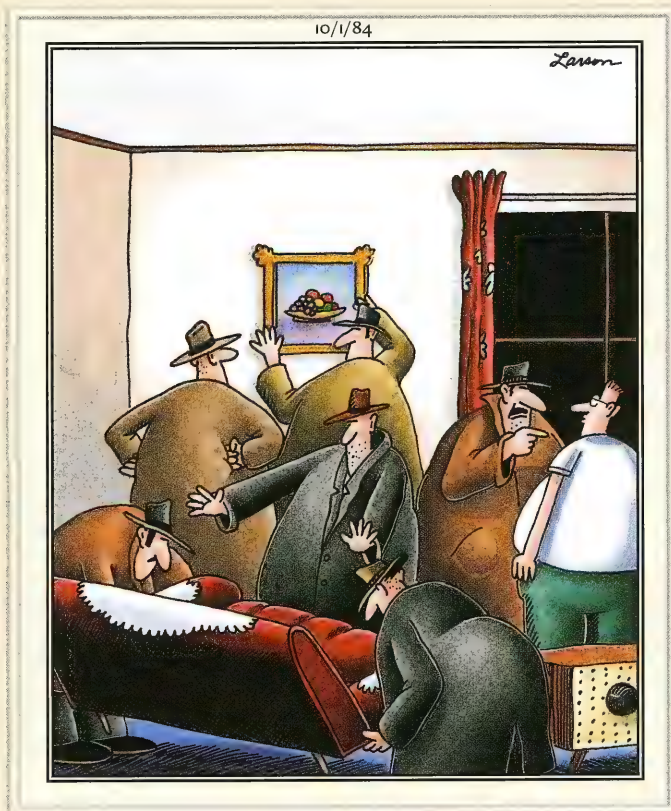
"Well, Mr. Cody, according to our questionnaire, you would probably excel in sales, advertising, slaughtering a few thousand buffalo, or market research."



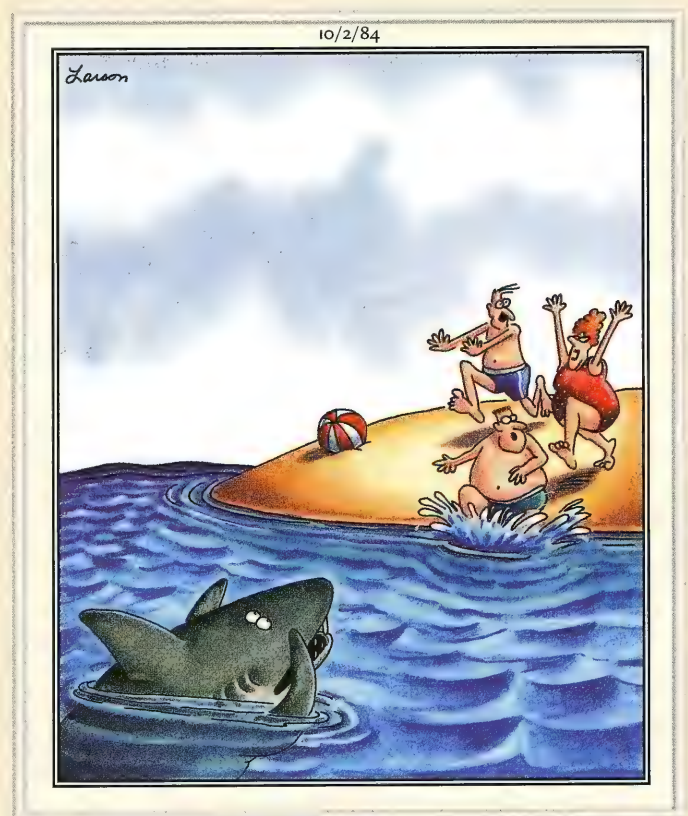
"Harold! The dog's trying to blow up the house again! Catch him in the act or he'll never learn!"



"Ha! Ain't a rattler, Jake. You got one of them maraca players down your bag—and he's probably more scared than you."



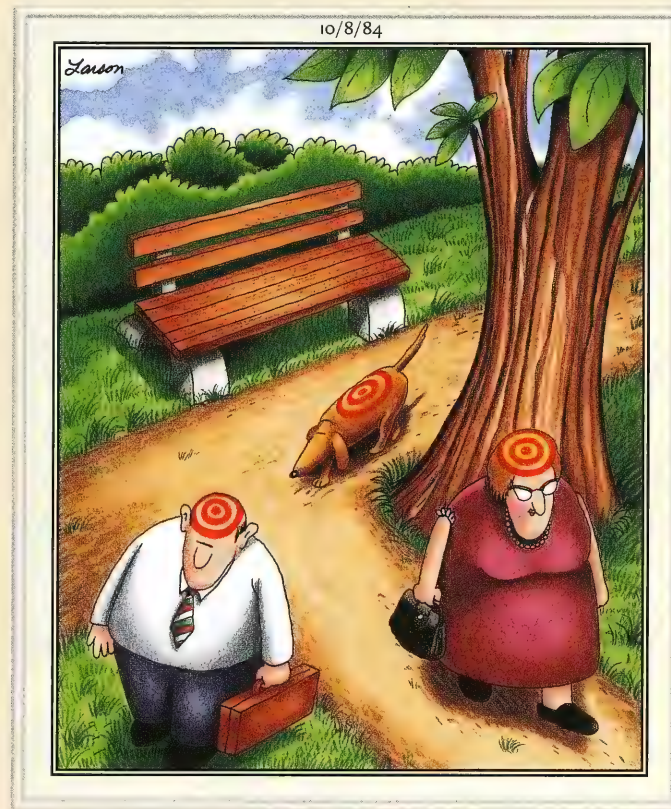
"The boss wants his money, see? Or next time it won't be just your living room we rearrange."



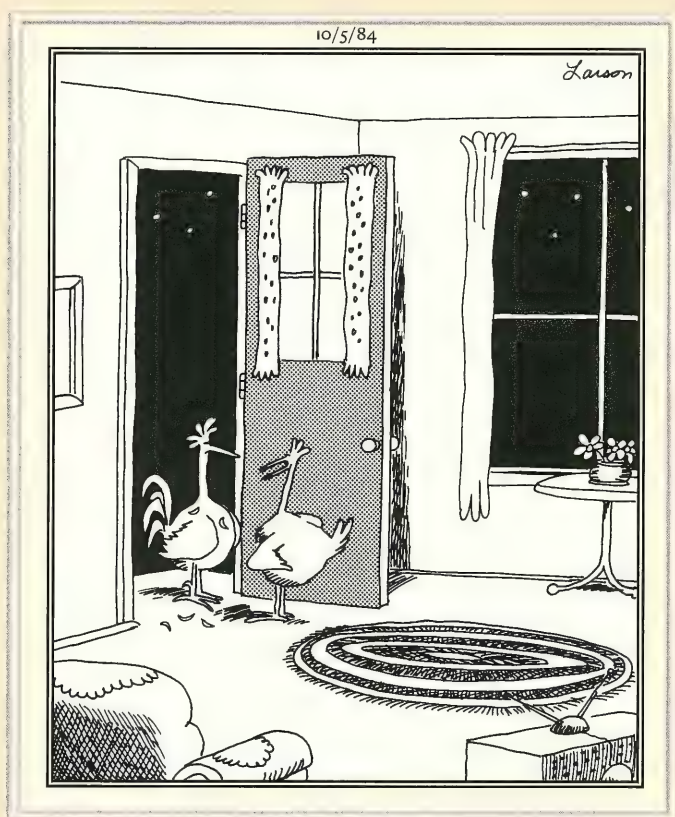
"BEAR! BEAR!"



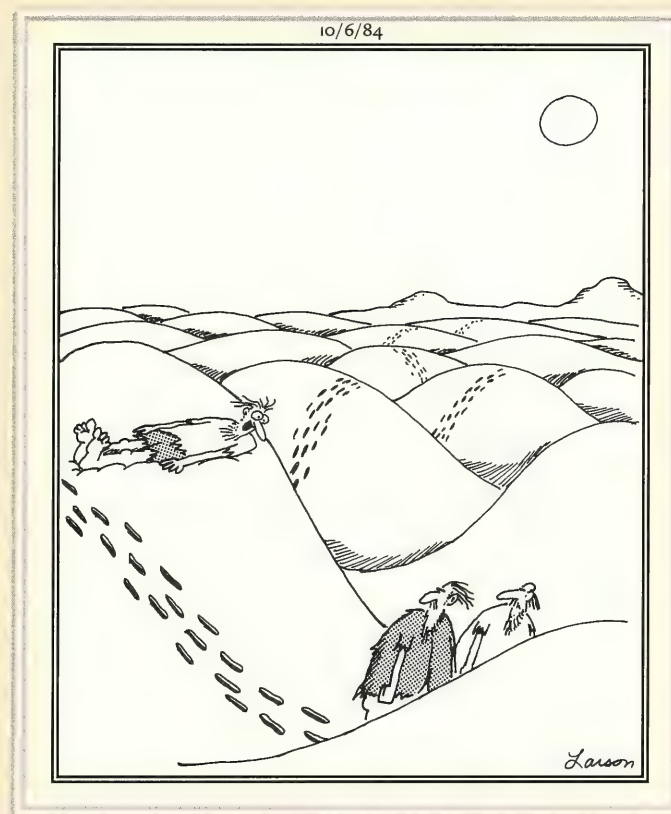
"Bob! Wake up! Bob! A ship! I think I see a ship! ... Where are your glasses?"



How birds see the world



"Oh, I see! You return covered with blond feathers, and I'm supposed to believe you crossed the road *just* to get to the other side?"



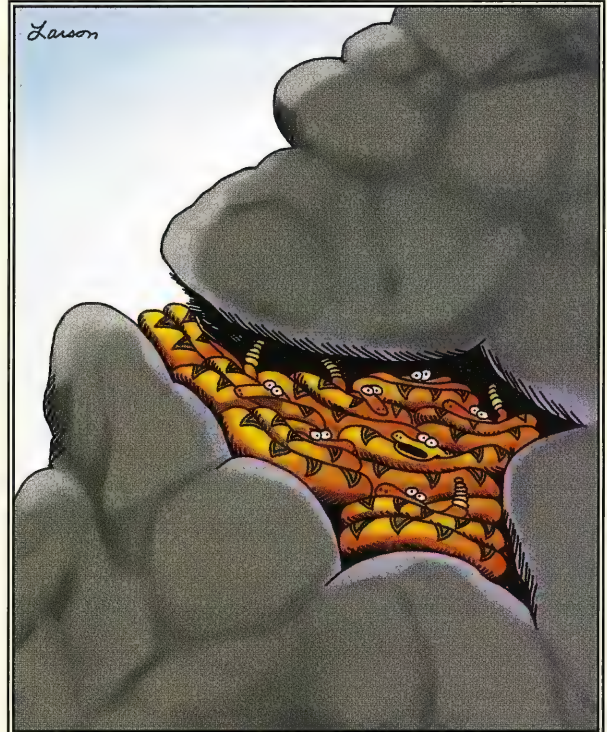
"Hey! I'm gonna roll now! You guys gonna watch or what?"

10/9/84



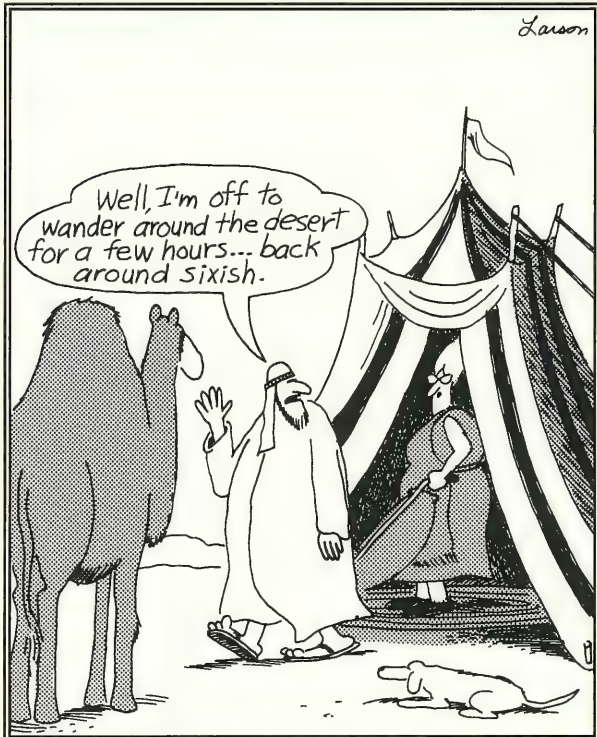
"Any theories on this, Cummings?"

10/10/84



"Hey, I feel someone moving! Dang, this place gives me the willies."

10/11/84

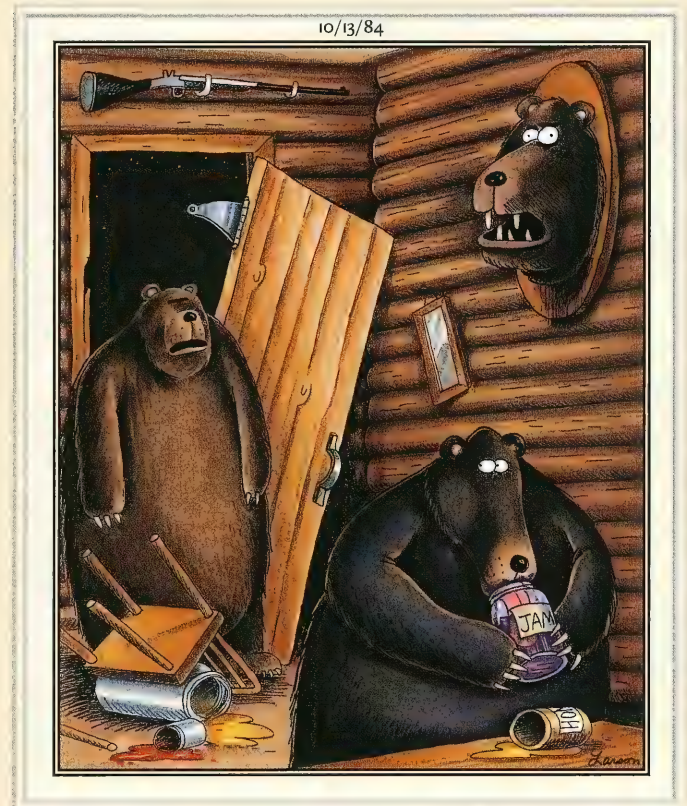
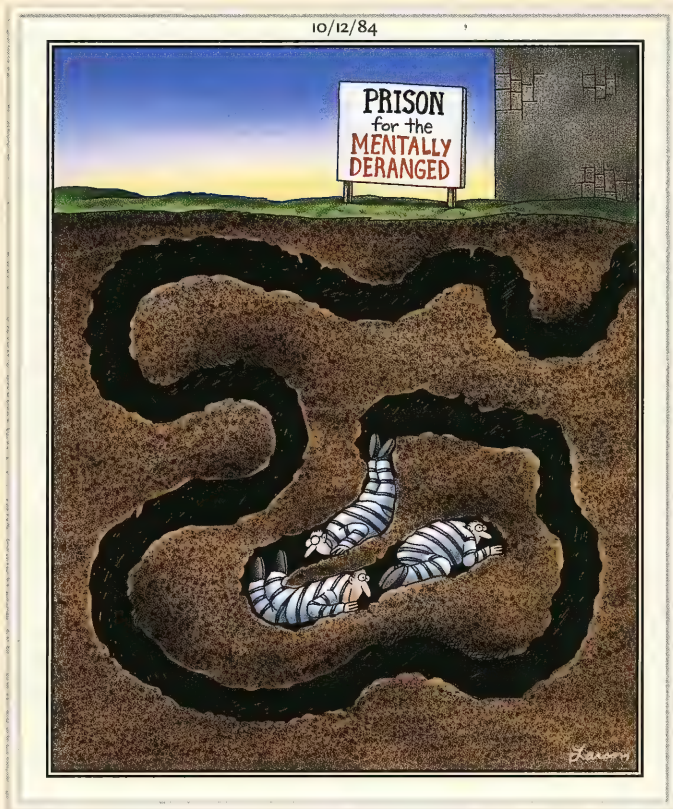


The restless life of the nomad

10/15/84



"No, thank you. It's a little nutso out there for me right now."



"Oh, Laaaaaarrrrrry ... I think you should look up niiiiice and eaaaaasy and see what's right ... over ... your ... head."



"Sorry about this, buddy, but the limit on those things is half a dozen—looks like you're one over."



"Take this handkerchief back to the lab, Stevens. I want some answers on which monster did this—Godzilla? Gargantua? Who, dammit!?"

10/18/84



Animal nerds

10/20/84



10/23/84

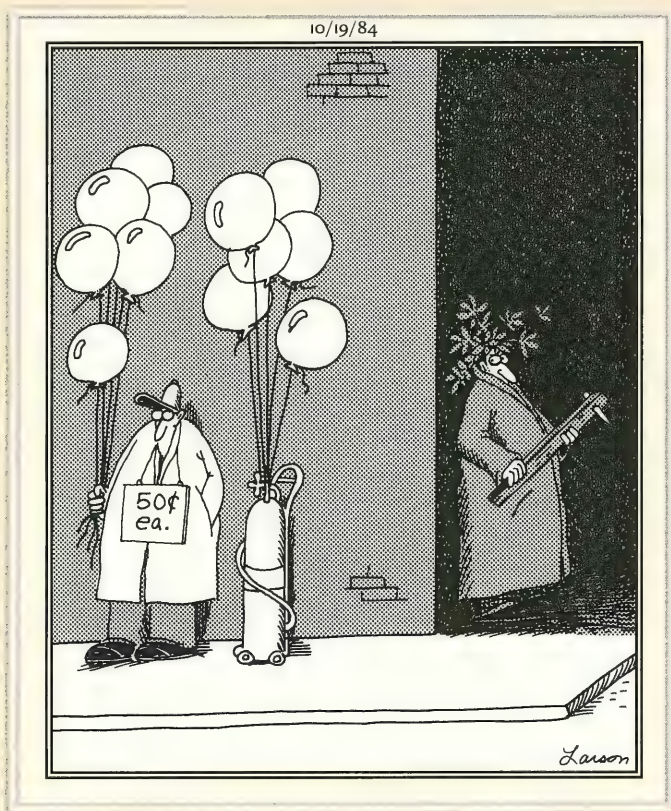


Early experiments in transportation

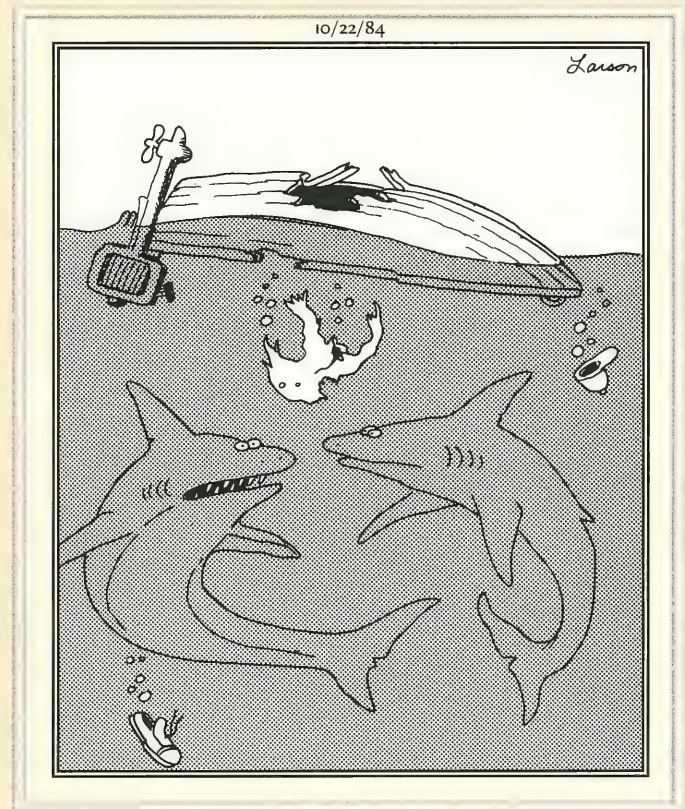
10/24/84



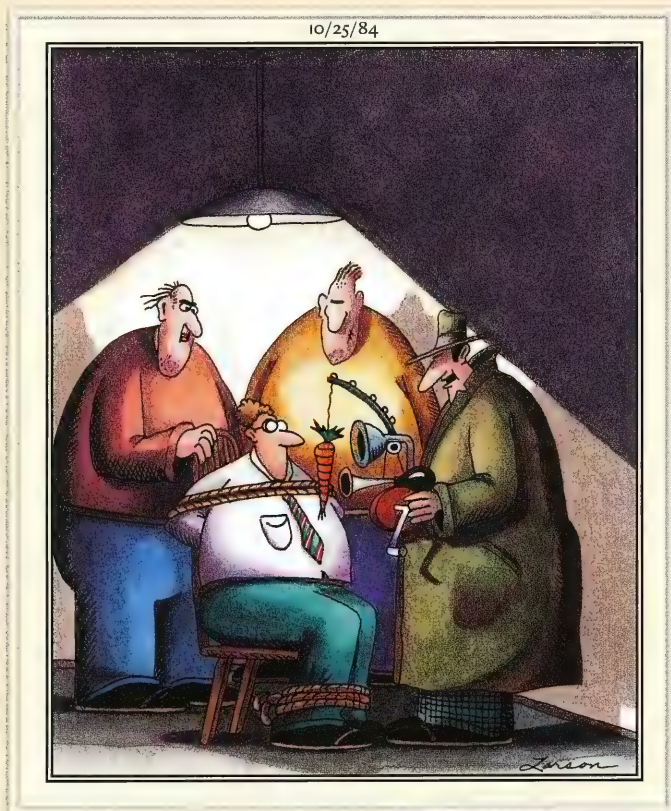
"I don't seeeeee ... Wait! There it is! Oo!
I hate those little slivers that stand
straight up and down."



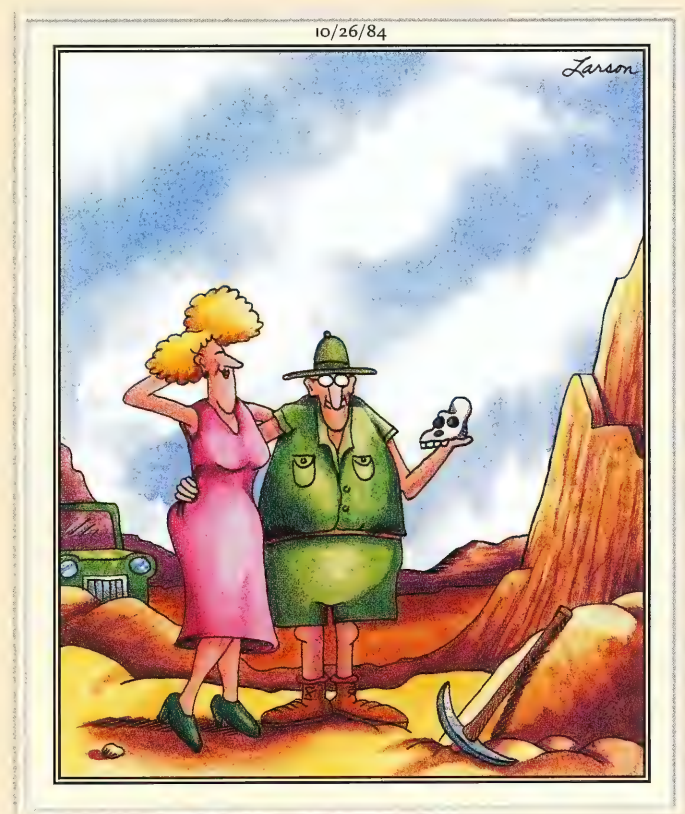
The balloon was his enemy.



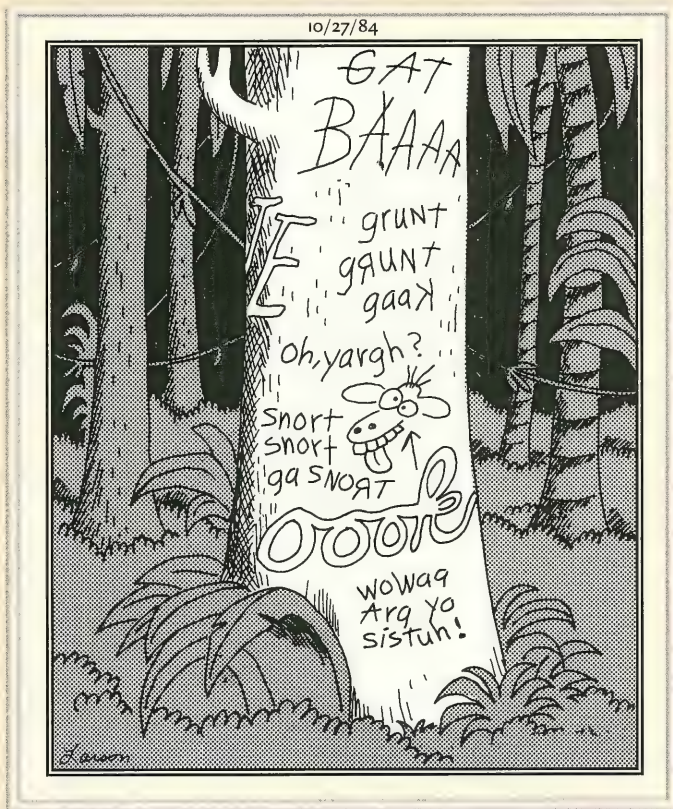
"I was just going to circle them a couple times and leave—but they started yelling 'shark,' and suddenly I felt very proud."



"Well, we've tried every device and you still won't talk—every device, that is, except this little baby we simply call 'Mr. Thingy.'"



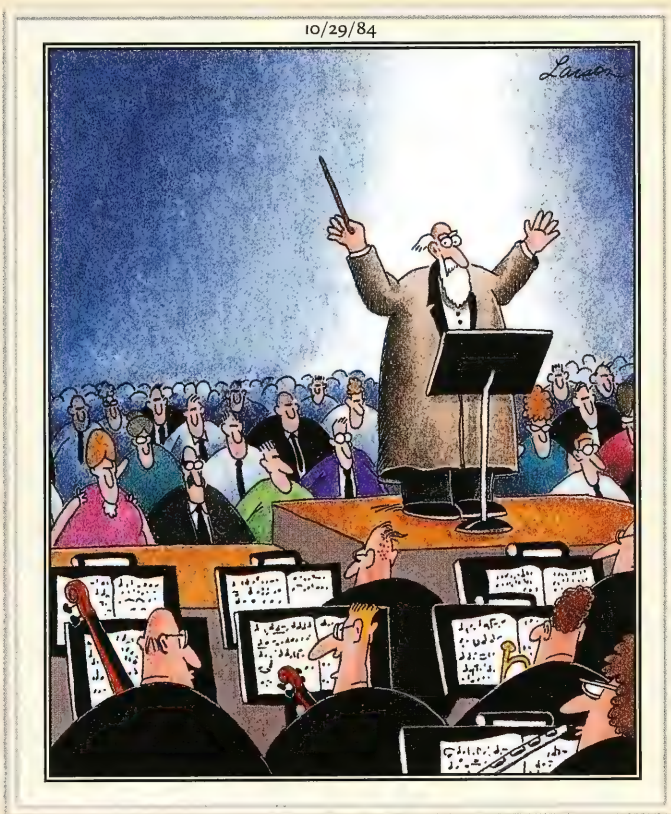
The anthropologist's dream: a beautiful woman in one hand, the fossilized skull of a *Homo habilis* in the other.



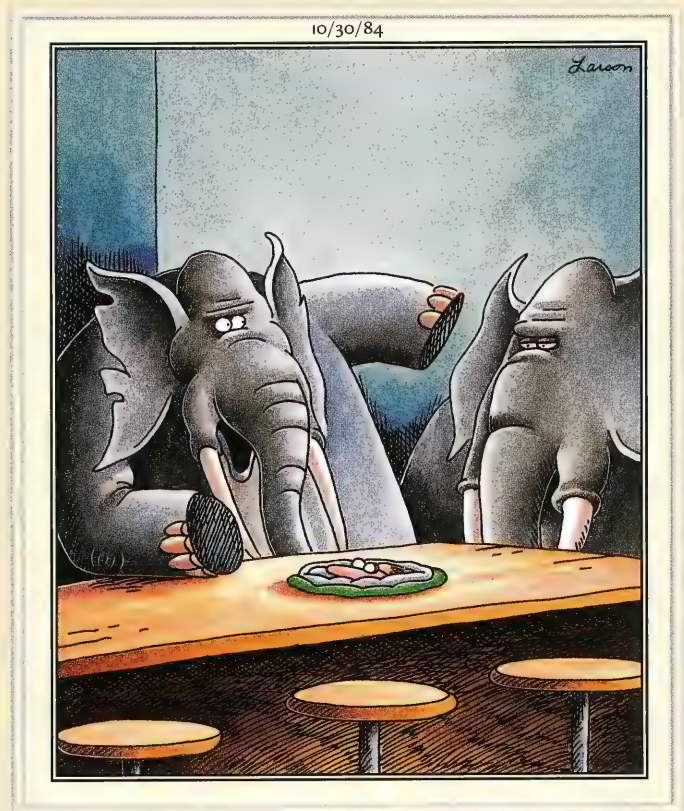
Jungle graffiti



When animal mimicry breaks down



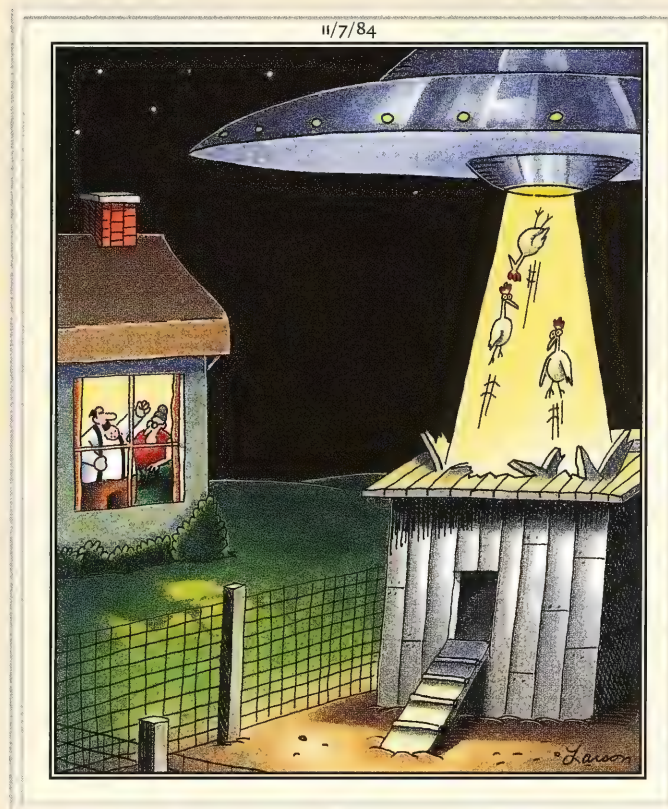
"Gee ... look at all the little black dots."



"And here he is—but when I started, I bet he was at least this tall."



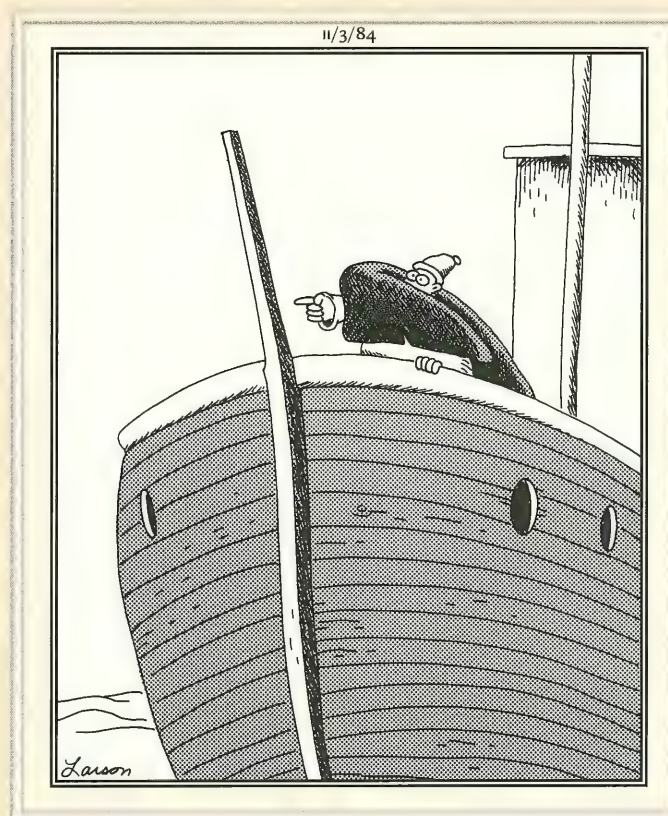
"Aha! According to this, your great-great-grandmother, Abigail Woodsworth, was once married to a man townsfolk simply called 'Grog.'"



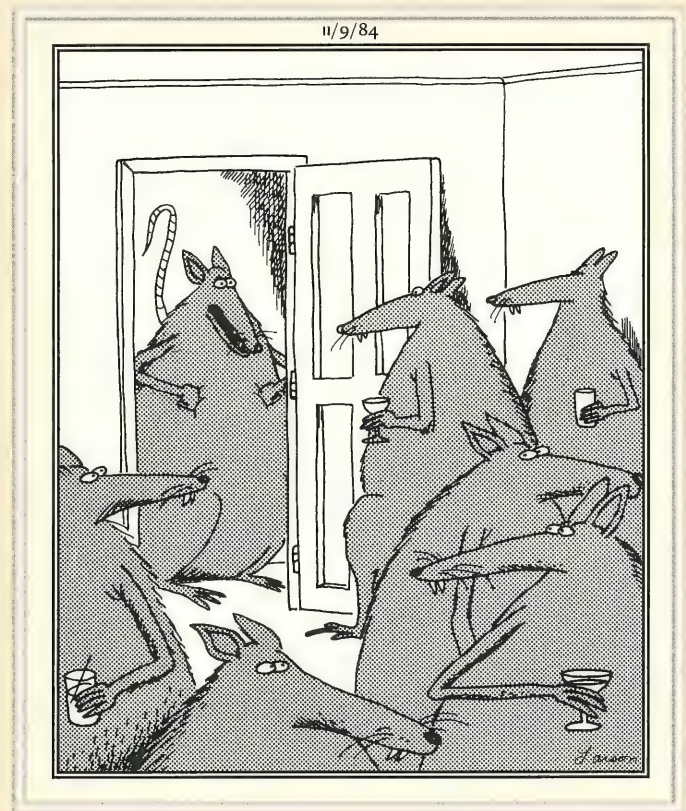
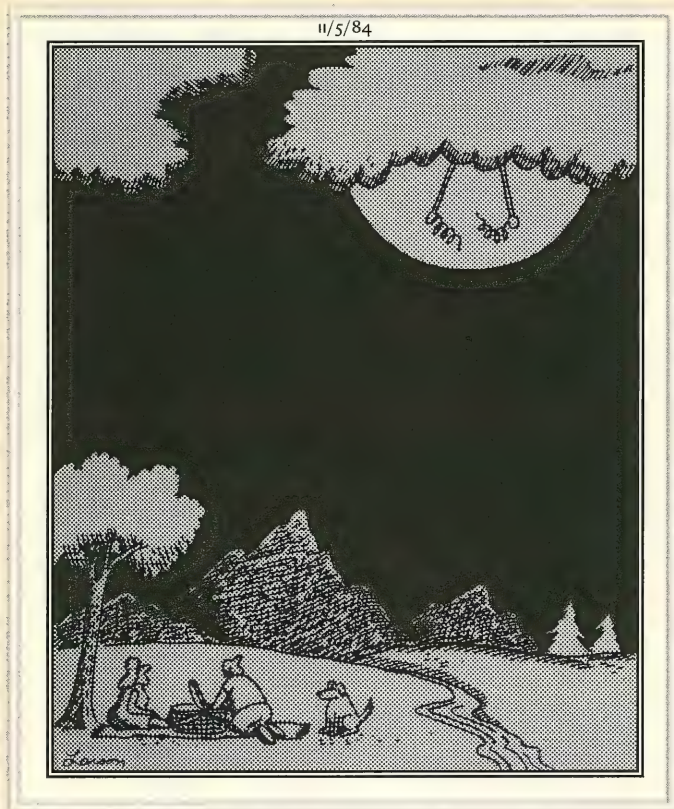
"Dang! Get my shotgun, Mama! The aliens are after the chickens again!"



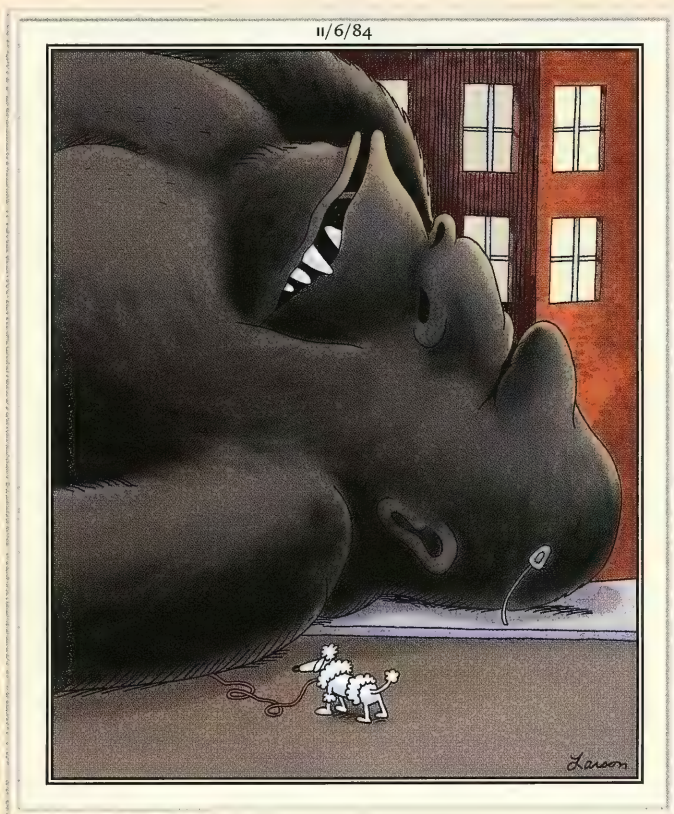
Vending machines of the Serengeti



"Thaaaaaar she—mmph!"



"Excuse me, but I'm trying to sleep next door
and all I hear is scratching, clawing,
and 'eek, eek, eek.'"



December 24, 1987

Gary Larson, Cartoonist ("Far Side")
c/o Andrews, McMeel & Parker
A Universal Press Syndicate Affiliate
4900 Main Street
Kansas City, MO 64112

Dear Gary:

We at Shell read and enjoy your "Off-the-Wall Calendar" every day; however, we are stumped by your December 22, 1987, cartoon (copy attached) and we would like you to explain it to us.

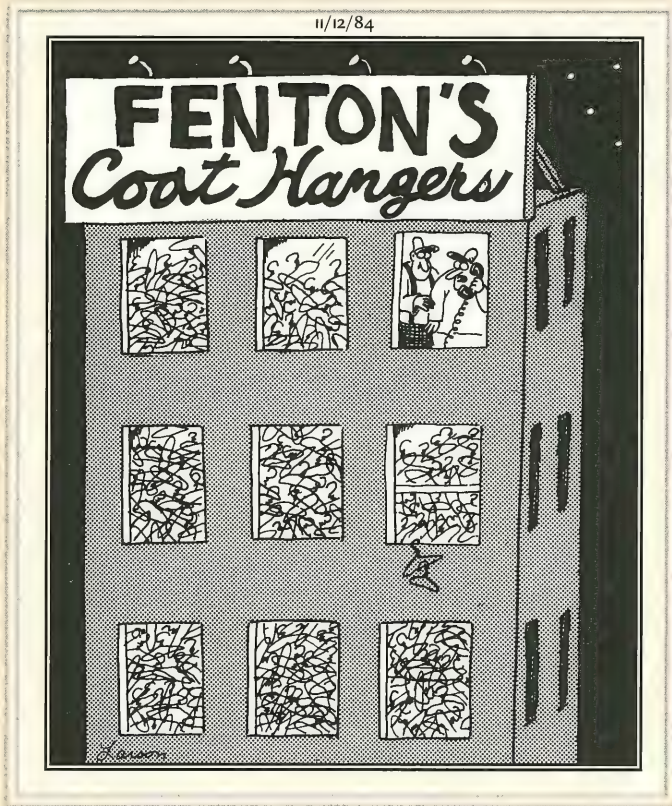
We don't feel that it can be as simple as "the gorilla fell on the dog's master, so what is the dog going to do now?" We are assuming that the gorilla is King Kong, but why is he lying down? What is that little thing his head is lying on (a parking meter)? Is there something missing, some punch line that we are not getting? Did you put in a cartoon that you knew no one could figure out on purpose just to boggle our minds? This is driving us crazy.

Please send your response to:

Kevin M. Holt or Herb Temple
Shell Oil Company
Financial Department - General Accounting

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Holt
Herb Temple
Ed Filomeo
Cheri Ives



"Mr. Fenton? First of all, I want to say that it's all Carl Denham's fault. 'Watchin' that machine?' I says to Carl, and ... Wait, Carl! You can talk when I'm through!"

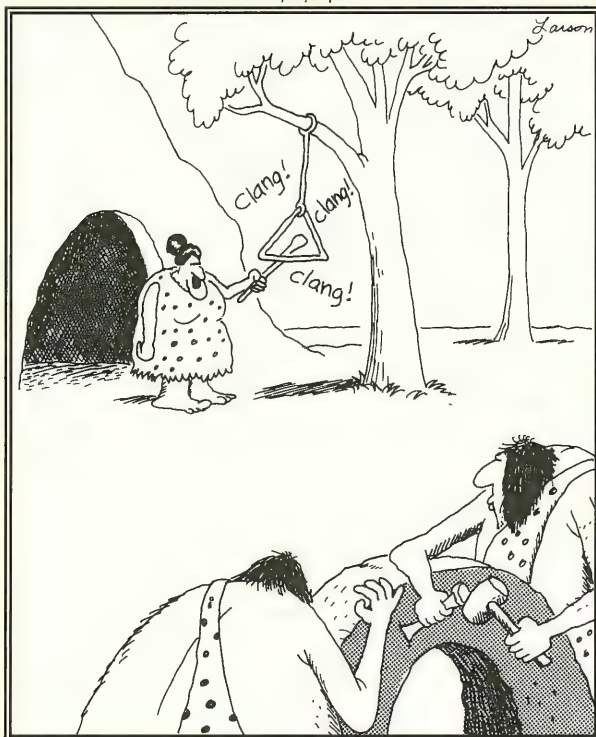


"Well, this shouldn't last too long."



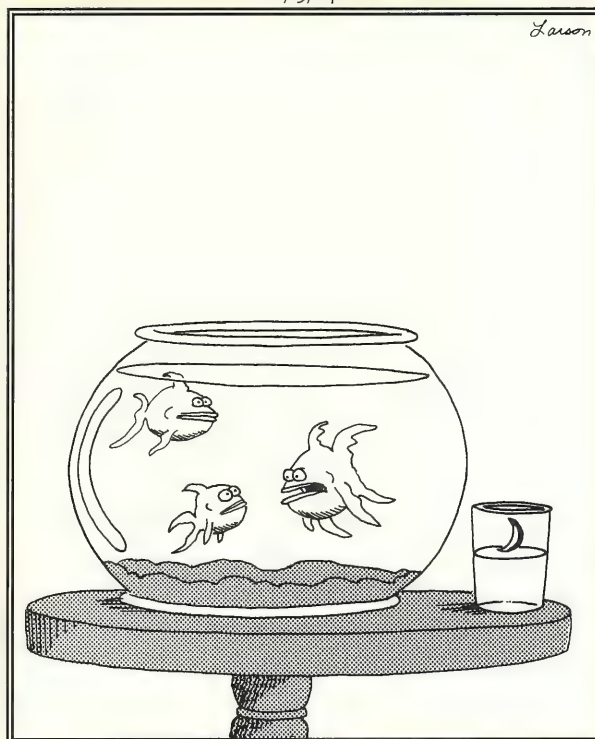
"Now remember—roar just as you leap. ... These things have some of the greatest expressions."

11/16/84



"Come and get it! Commmmme and get it! ...
It's not going to get any more raw, y'know!"

11/19/84



"Again? Well *this* time, young man,
you use the glass."

11/14/84



Hour after hour, cup after cup, the two men
matched their caffeine limits in a traditional
contest of the Old West.

11/15/84



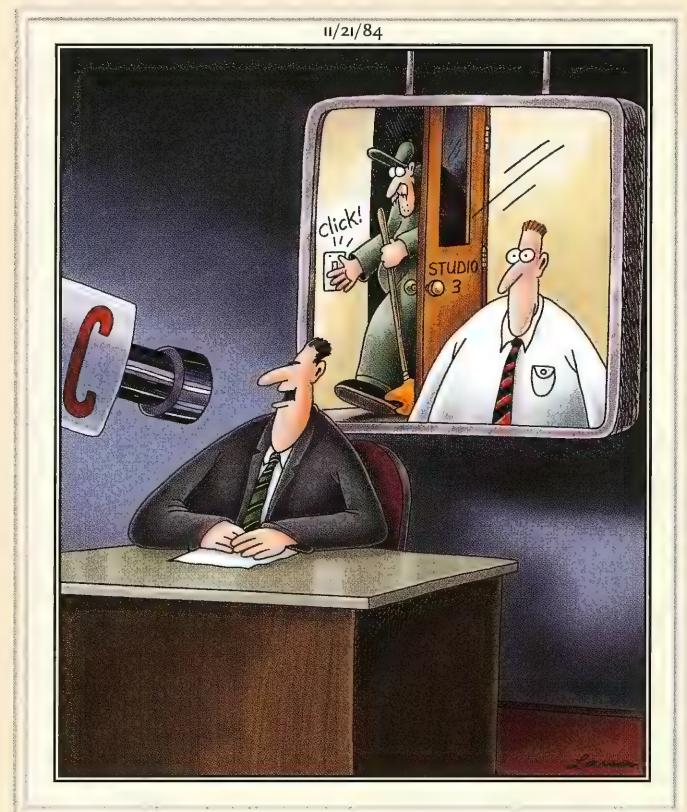
"Well, heaven knows what it is or where it
came from—just get rid of it! But save
that cheese first."



Aerobics in hell



The Holsteins visit the Grand Canyon.



"My next guest, on the monitor behind me, is an organized crime informant. To protect his identity, we've placed him in a darkened studio—so let's go to him now."

11/23/84



"Hey! ... Be cool, man, be cool!"

11/24/84



"Remember me, Mr. Schneider? Kenya. 1947. If you're going to shoot at an elephant, Mr. Schneider, you better be prepared to finish the job."

11/26/84



"Hey, thank you! Thank you! That was 'Tie a Yellow Ribbon.' ... Now, what say we all *really* get down?"

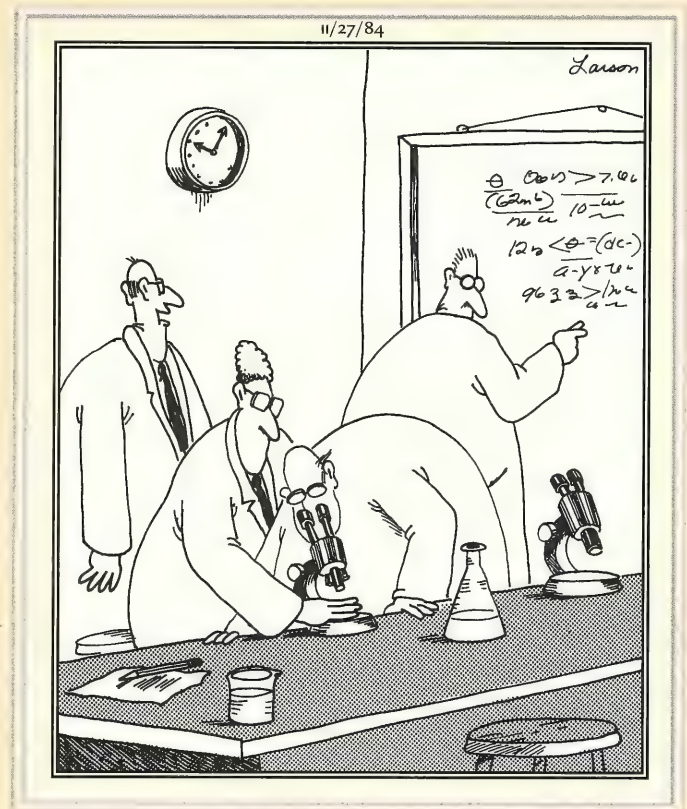
11/28/84



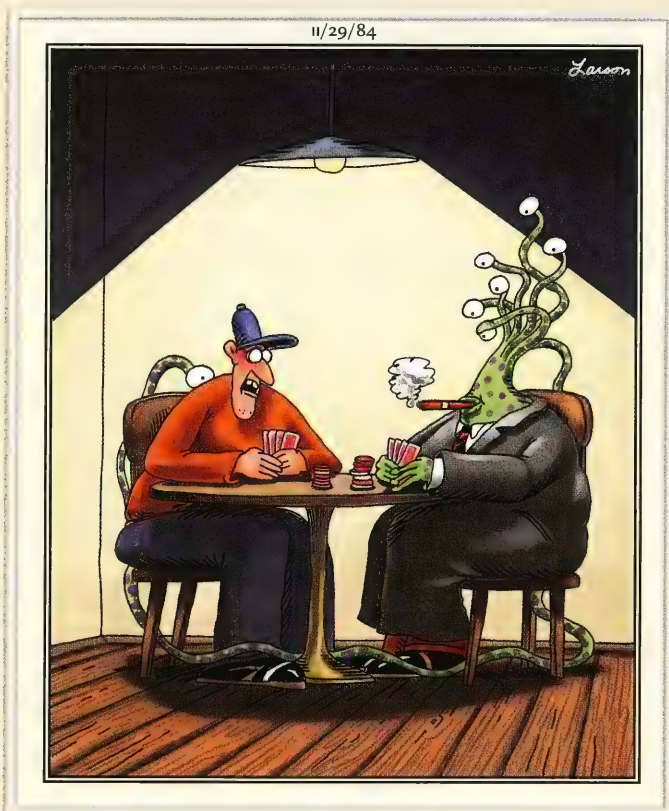
"Wendell ... I'm not content."



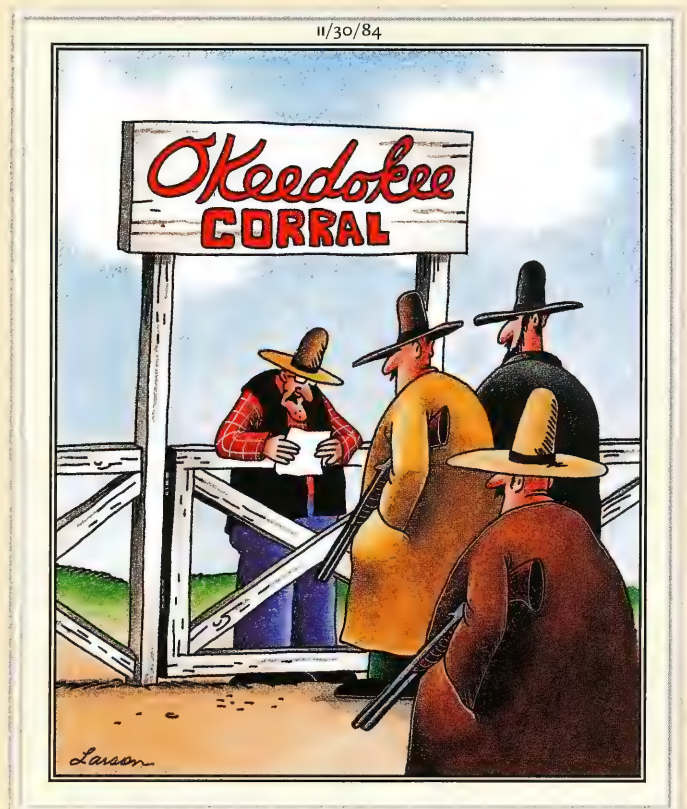
Profanity on other planets



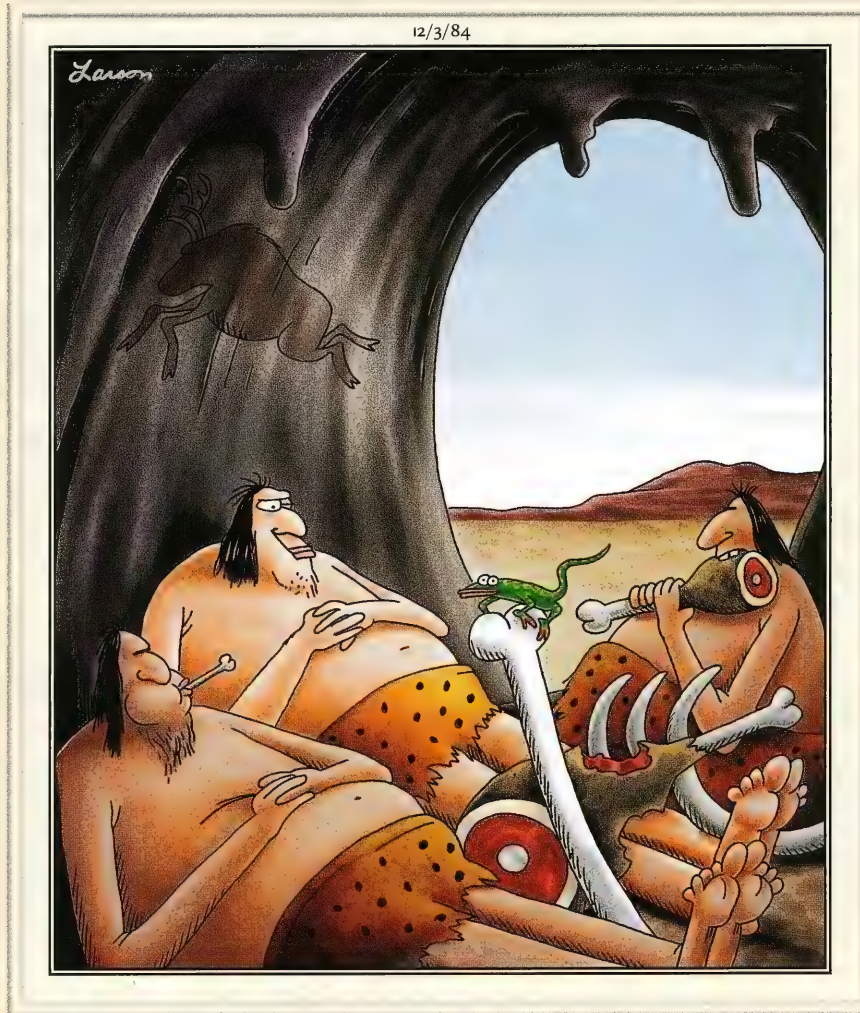
"Foster! You better get over here if you want to see Meeher's hangnail magnified 500 times."



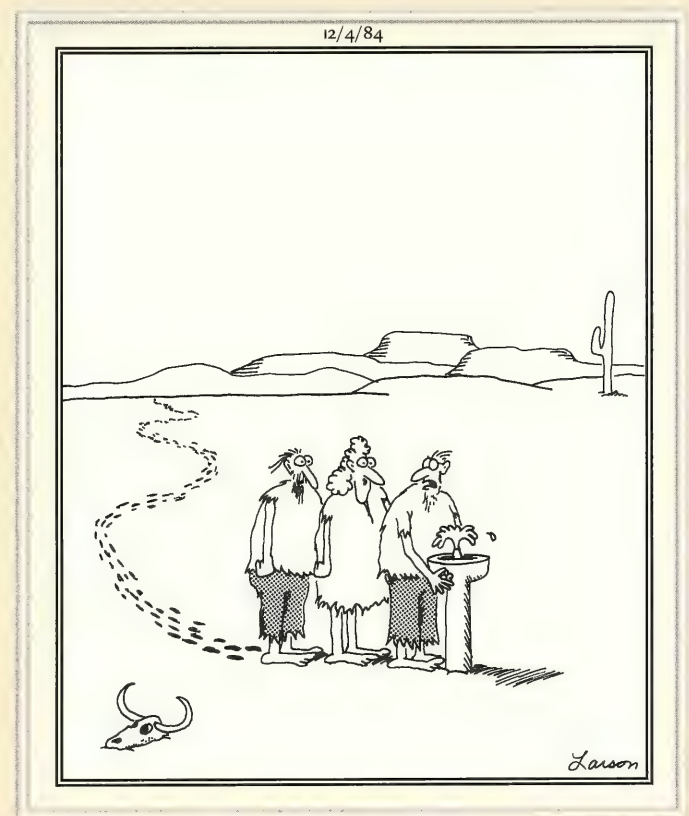
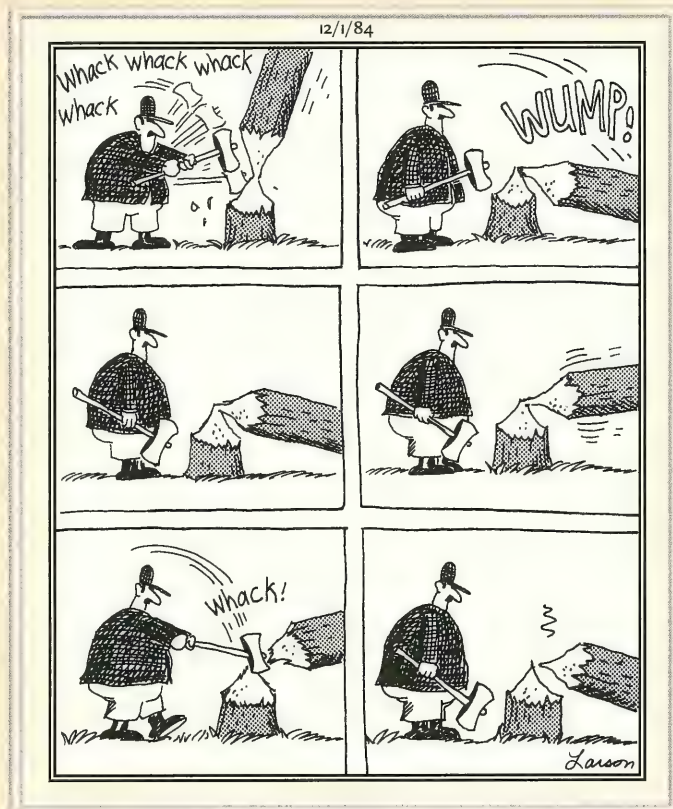
"Well, shucks! I've lost again! Talk about your alien luck!"



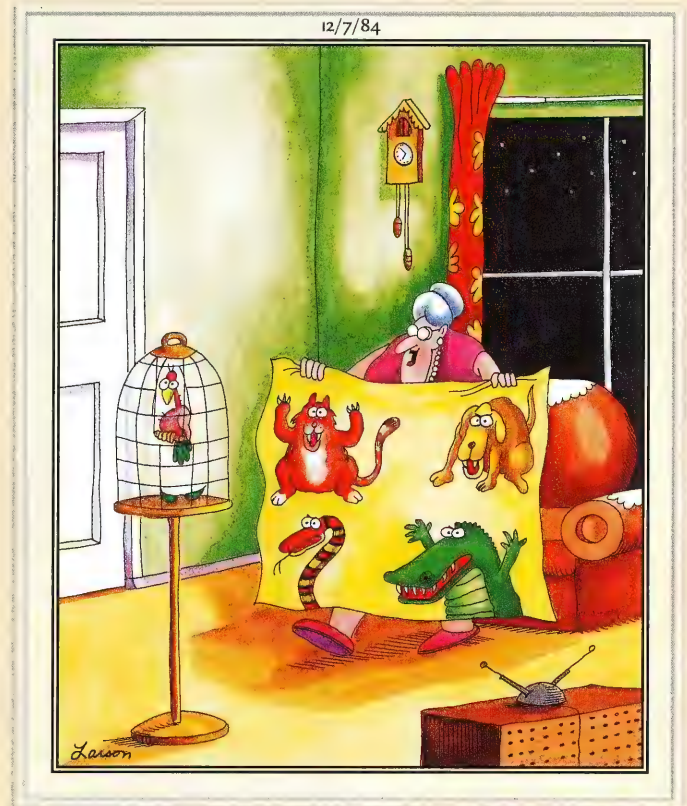
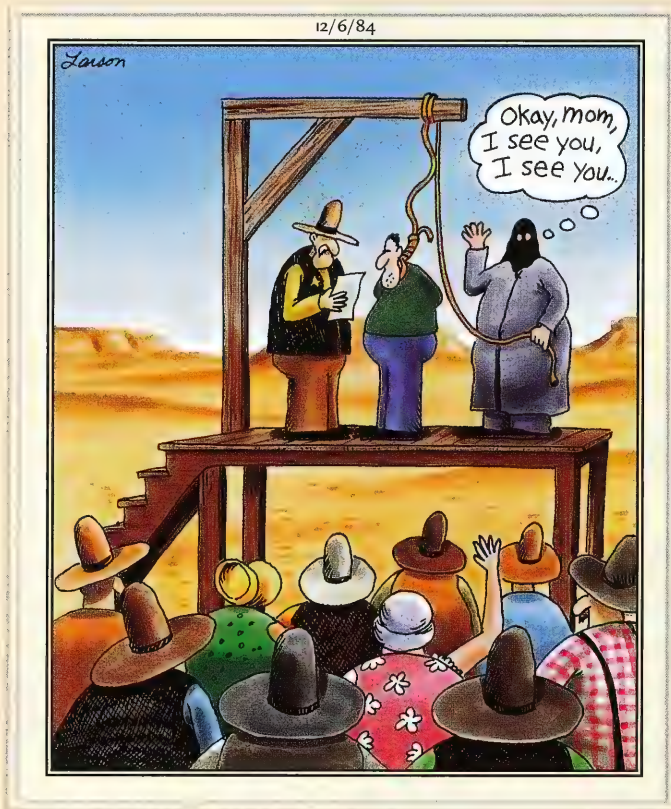
"Let's see here. ... Oh! Close, but no cigar. You want the place up the road—same as I told those other fellahs."



The origin of "dessert"



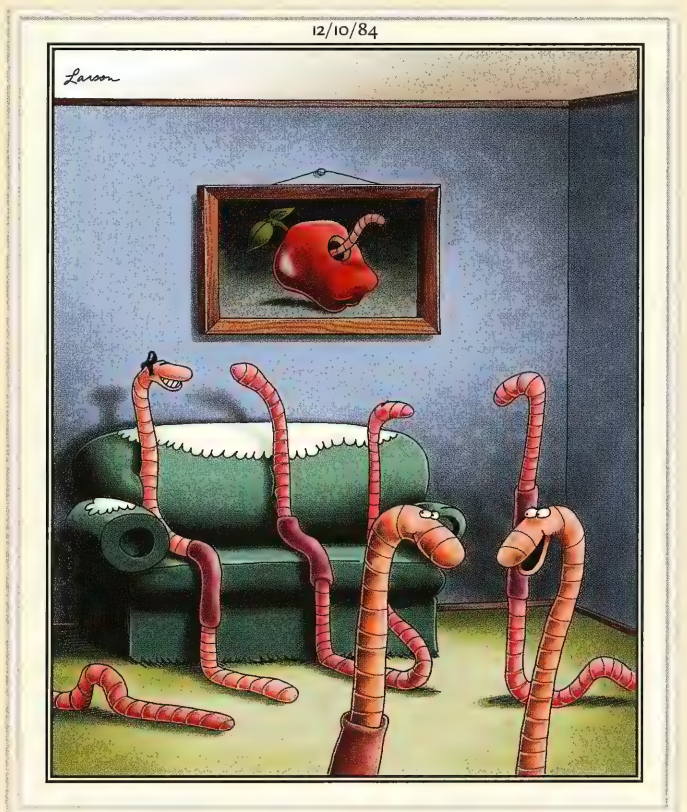
"Now just hold your horses, everyone. ...
Let's let it run for a minute or so and
see if it gets any colder."



"Bedtime, Leroy. Here comes your animal blanket."



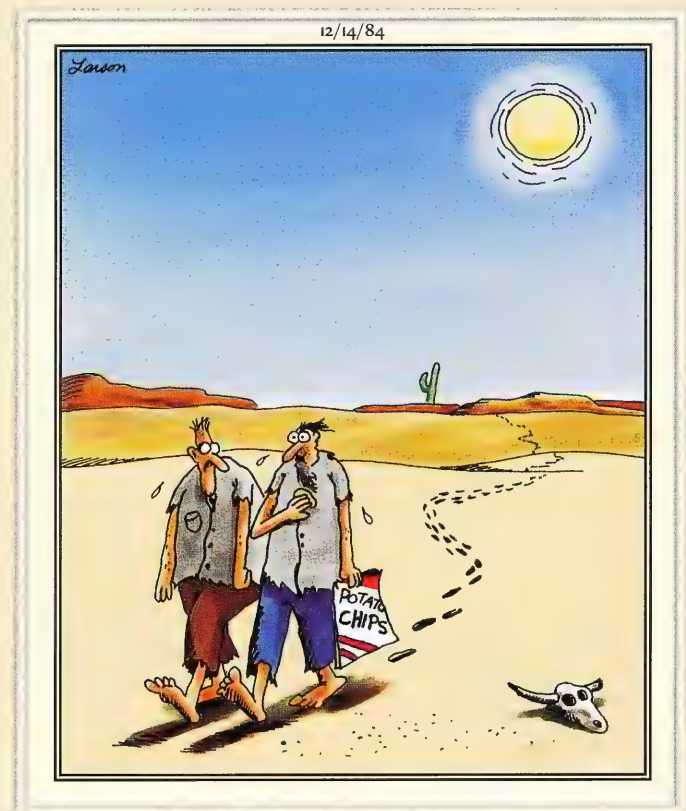
"It's the mailman, doc. He scares me."



"You gotta check this out, Stuart. Vinnie's over on the couch, putting the move on Zelda Schwartz—but he's talkin' to the wrong end."



"Here, Fifi! C'mon! ... Faster, Fifi!"



"Uh-oh ... I've got a feeling I shouldn't have been munching on these things for the last mile and a half."



"Hold on there! I think you misunderstood— I'm Al Tilley ... the bum."

Coaching Association of Canada
Association canadienne des entraîneurs

December 21, 1984

Mr. Gary Larson
The Far Side
c/o Universal Press Syndicate
6700 Squibb Road
Mission, Kansas
66202

Dear Gary,

1984 was quite an eventful year for me. I was married in February. My Niece, Karen Tilley, was crowned Miss Canada in October, and in December I appeared (in name only) in The Far Side.

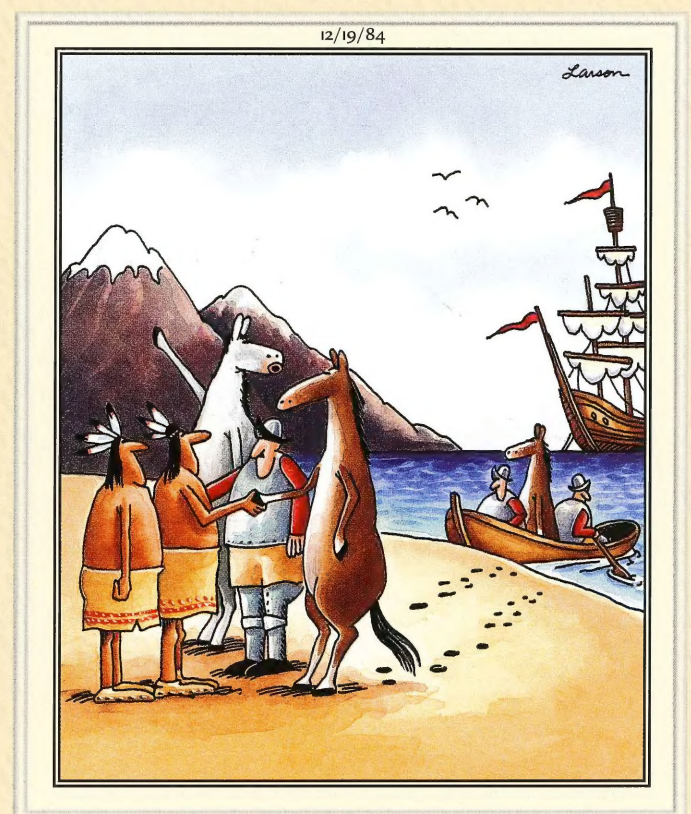
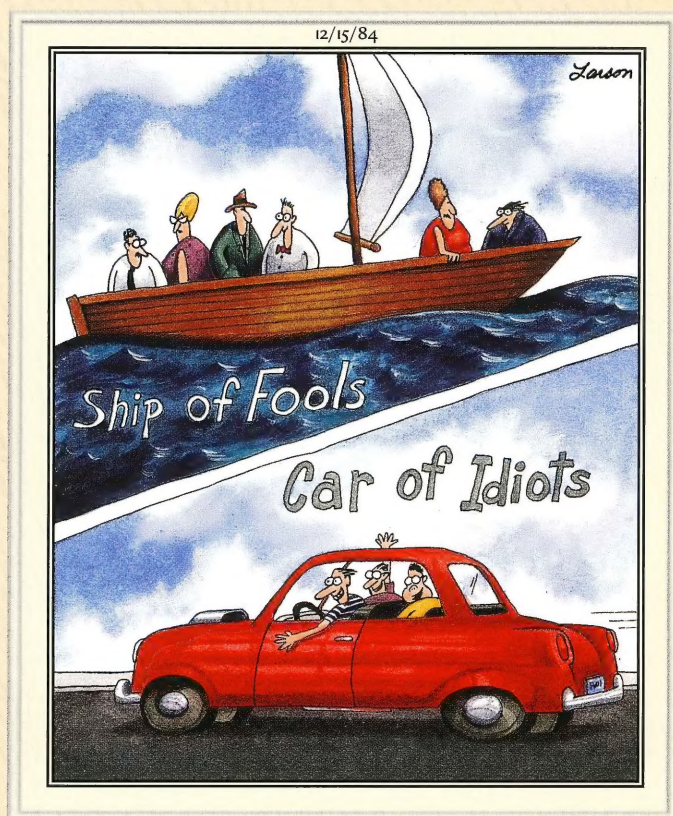
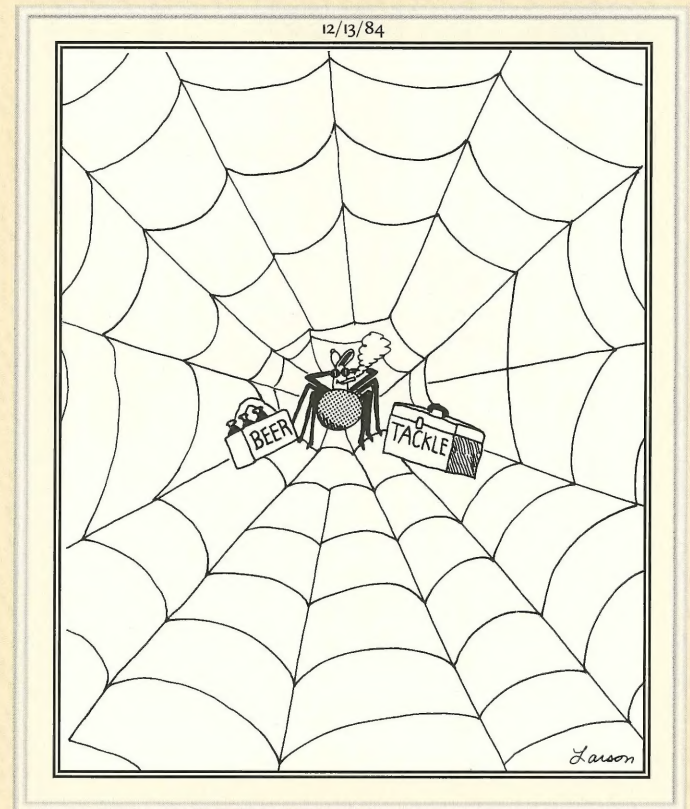
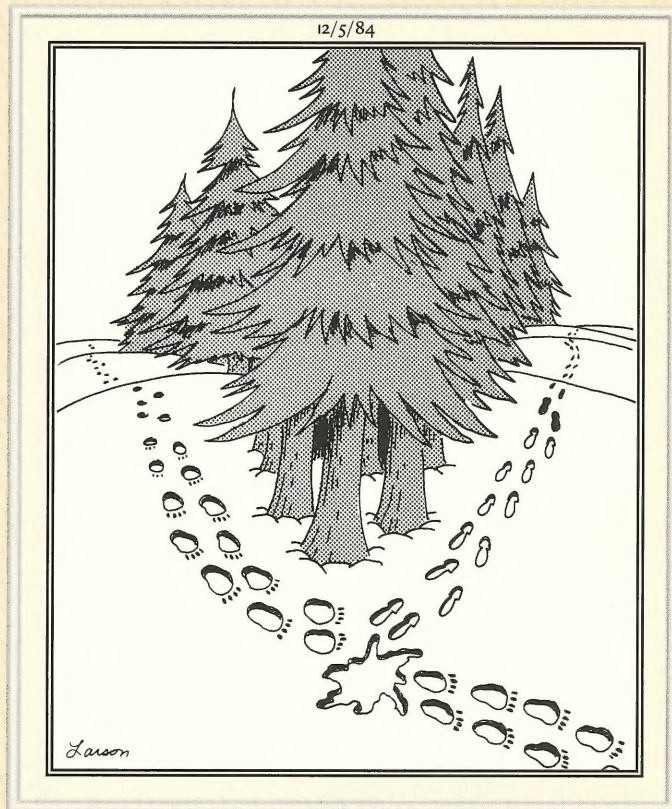
The last event, of course, takes precedence over the other two! (But please don't tell my wife or my niece.)

I would be curious to know if your role model for Al Tilley ... The Bum is drawn from your personal experience or whether my reputation here has permeated the United States!

Yours sincerely,

Al Tilley (The Bum)

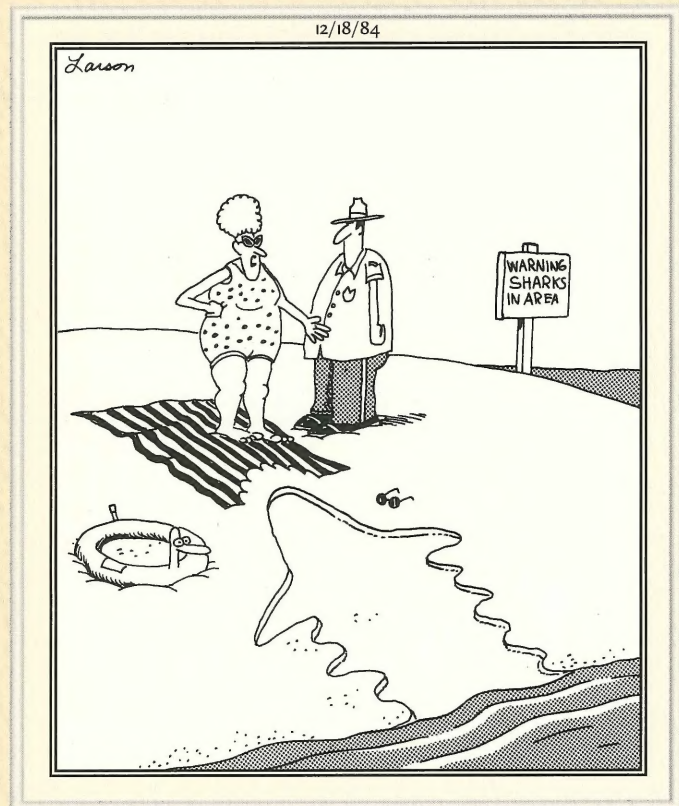
Al Tilley
Marketing Services Manager



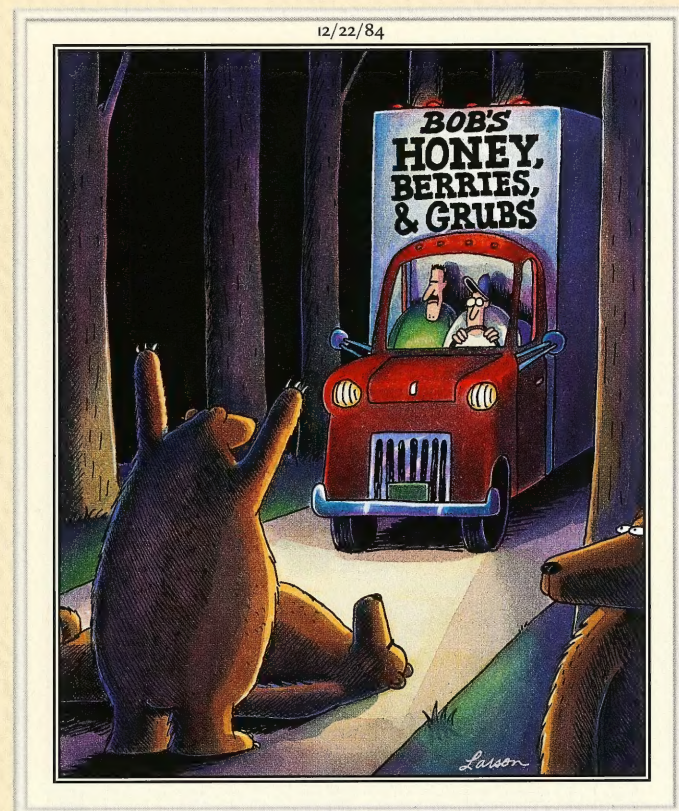
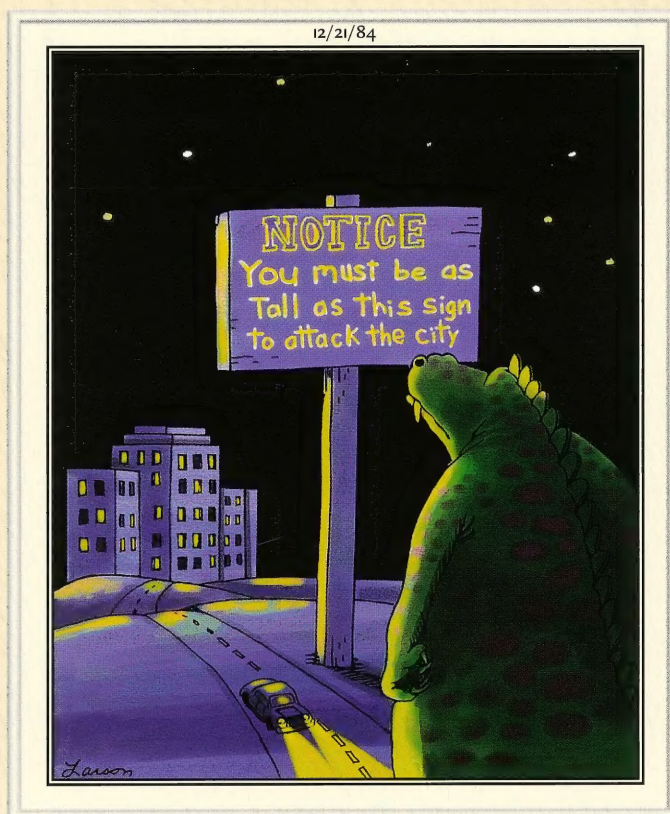
Circa 1500 A.D.: Horses are introduced to America.



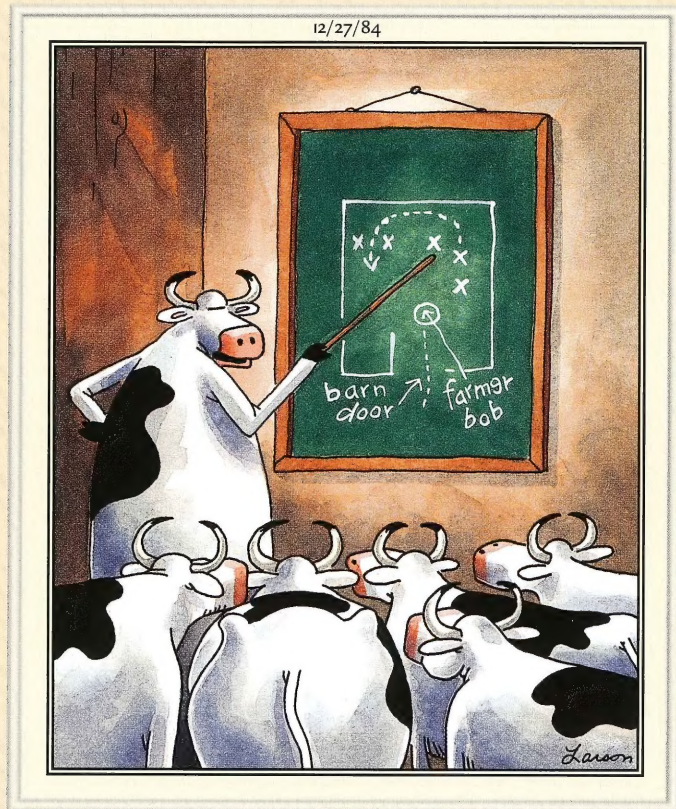
Mobster slapman



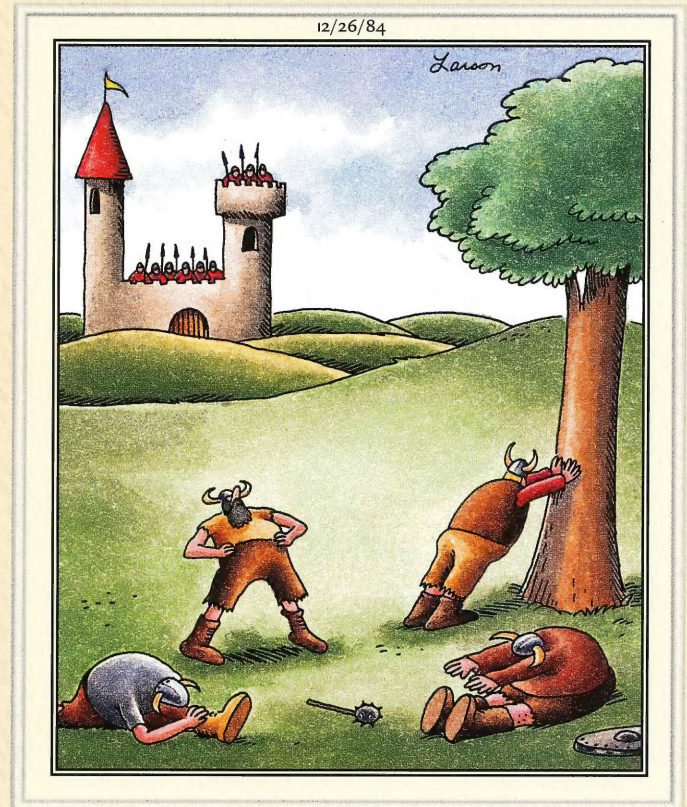
"Well, it just sort of wriggled its way up the beach, grabbed Jonathan, and dragged him back again. I mean, the poor thing must have been half-starved!"



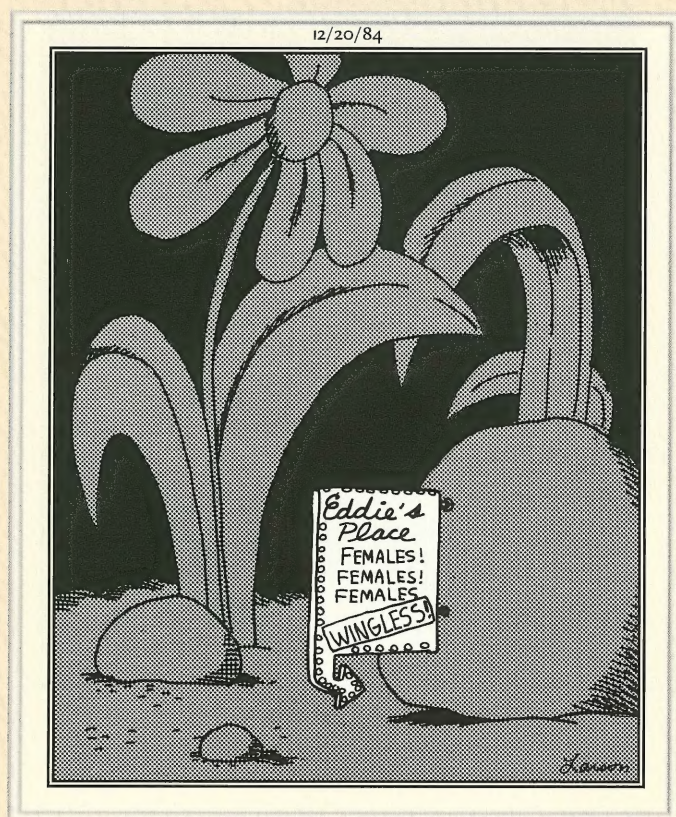
"Just stay in the cab, Vern ... maybe that bear's hurt and maybe he ain't."



"So when Farmer Bob comes through the door, three of us circle around and ... Muriel! Are you chewing your cud while I'm talking?"



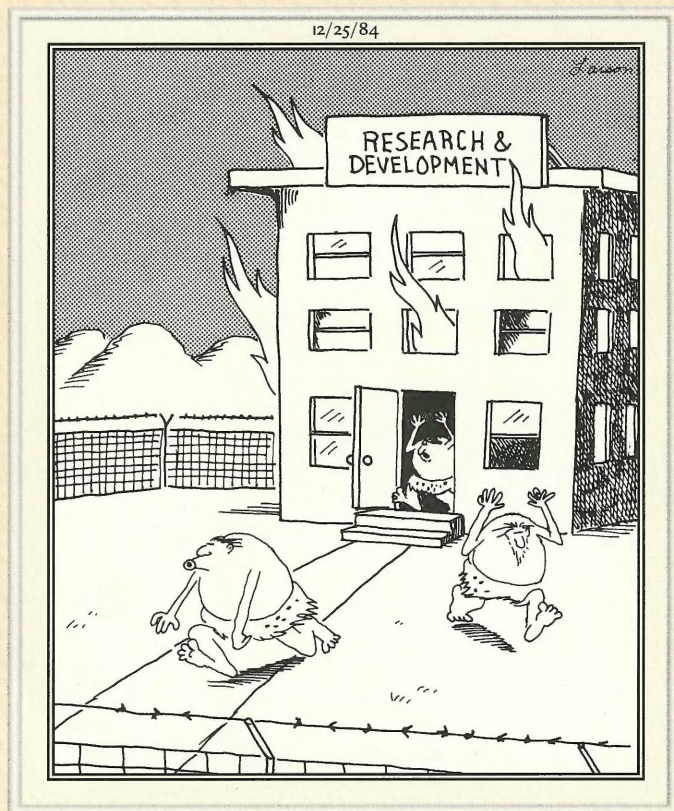
The Vikings, of course, knew the importance of stretching before an attack.



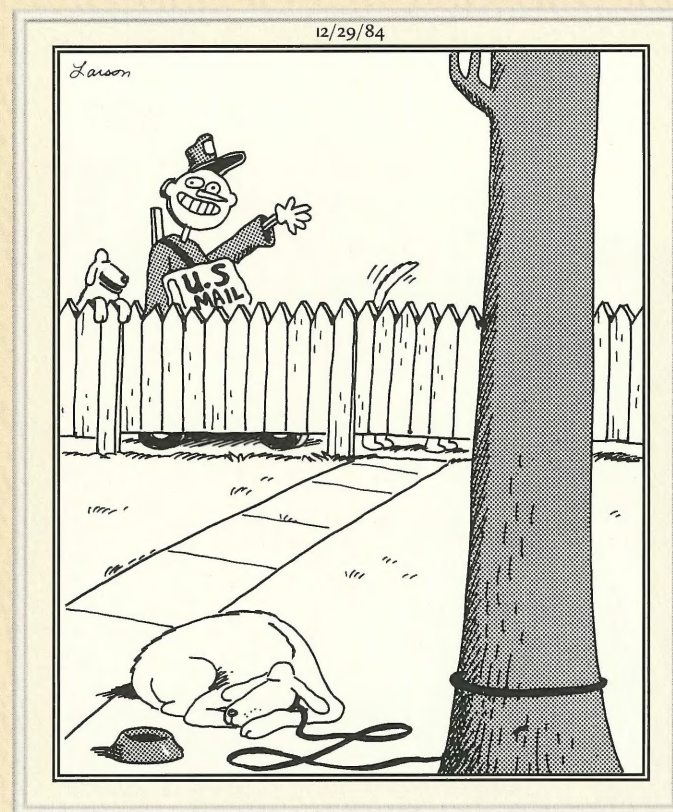
Insect hangouts



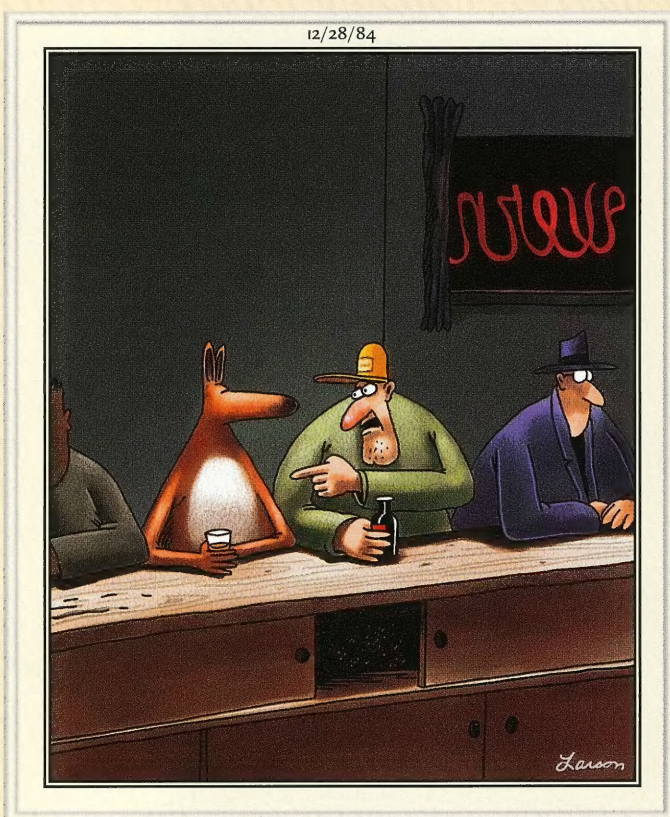
"Dang it, Monica! I can't live this charade any longer! I'm not a telephone repairman who stumbled into your life—I'm a Komodo dragon, largest member of the lizard family and a filthy liar."



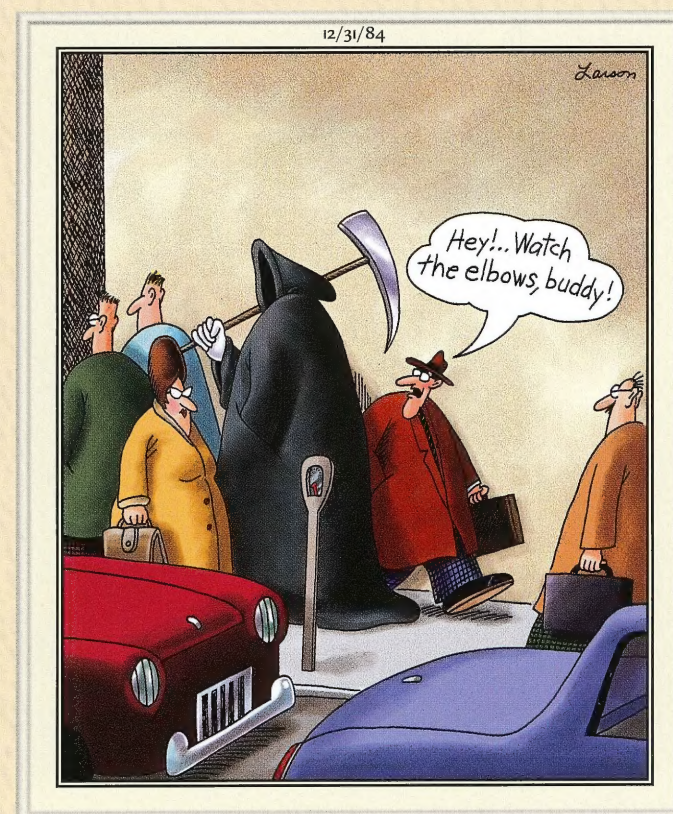
Fire is invented.



"Okay, he's asleep. Pull the wagon, Buck, and I'll start barkin' my head off. ...
God, I love this."



"Oh, is that so? Well, you might be a kangaroo, but I know a few things about marsupials myself!"



Unwittingly, Irwin has a brush with Death.